

Shuttle shut down seconds before launch

CAPE CANAVERAL (AP) — Space shuttle Columbia's engines shut down and the flight was aborted a heart stopping three seconds before Monday morning's launch with seven astronauts on a research mission. Two of the pad's main engines had ignited and white smoke and vapour engulfed the pad as usual before the shutdown occurred. Officials said a valve in the third engine apparently did not close and caused pressure to build up in a purge line. The five Americans and two Germans were in no danger, officials said. They left the shuttle cockpit about 45 minutes later with looks of disgust on their faces. As the first astronaut, German physicist Ulrich Walter, crawled out the hatch, Radolf Teuvsen, a spokesman for Germany's space agency, noted: "I've never seen him that depressed." Shuttle commander Steven Nagel said that he knew what had happened, although not why, because of all the red lights on in the cockpit. "Those reassuring words... that everything was OK came very quickly to us," Mr. Nagel said. "So there weren't many moments of worry. It's mostly just disappointment."

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Russian, U.S. submarines collide

MOSCOW (R) — Russian and U.S. nuclear submarines collided in Arctic waters this weekend but the crash, 170 kilometres off Russia's northern coast, caused little damage to either craft, officials said Monday. Russian naval commanders accused the rival boat of carrying out dangerous manoeuvres. Defence Department officials in Washington said the United States regretted the incident. Neither the U.S. nor Russian statements made clear whether the crash occurred on or beneath the surface. But U.S. attack submarines, designed to hunt and destroy other subs and surface ships, seldom move on the surface of the ocean.

ICRC to resume activities in Sudan

KHARTOUM (AP) — The International Committee of the Red Cross is to resume operations in south Sudan after a full year suspension, an agreement signed Sunday by the two sides said. The agreement did not say when exactly the Red Cross will resume its mission. "The agreement reflects the desire of the two sides to establish constructive and positive relationship for serving the joint target which is the lifting of the suffering of innocent civilians in the operation zones," the government news agency SUNA said referring to south Sudan.

Bomb hoaxes disrupt India's parliament

NEW DELHI (R) — Bomb scares forced an abrupt adjournment in India's parliament Monday and disrupted work at the supreme court, officials said. Both houses of parliament were adjourned in the afternoon after presiding officers were informed of a bomb threat, members said. A bomb squad was called but found nothing. Work in both the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court was disrupted following anonymous hoax telephone calls that bombs had been placed in the court rooms, police said. India has been jittery since a wave of car and suitcase bomb blasts in Bombay on March 12 killed 250 people and injured 1,200. Four days later a huge blast of explosives in Calcutta killed 69 people and injured scores more. Security in Delhi has been considerably strengthened around parliament, government buildings and the homes of top officials.

Nimitz enters Gulf

BAHRAIN (AP) — The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz entered the Gulf overnight along with a six-star battleship, a U.S. navy spokesman said Monday. Aircraft carrier battle groups routinely have been deployed in the Gulf since the Gulf crisis. The nuclear powered Nimitz replaced the USS Kitty Hawk, which departed last week after nearly three months in the region. With the Nimitz were the cruisers USS Reeves, USS Truxtun and USS Lake Champlain, the destroyer USS Leffew and the supply ships USS Kansas City and USS Shasta. The Nimitz battle group brought to about 15 the number of U.S. warships deployed in the Gulf and the Arabian and Red Seas.

Forecast projects drop in Libyan oil

NICOSIA (AP) — Libya's oil production, its main source of income, is expected to drop after the turn of the century and will fall to less than a quarter of current levels without more investment and new finds, an oil industry newsletter said Monday. The Middle East Economic Survey said a forecast made for Libya by unidentified economic and oil experts expects oil production to fall from the current 1.7 million barrels a day to 1.1 million barrels a day from 2000 to 2010, and to drop to only 500,000 barrels a day in the following decade. The Cyprus-based weekly quoted the report as saying total oil revenues were expected to equal \$116 billion for 1992-2000, \$113 billion during 2000-2010, and \$90 billion for the following decade.

Israeli troops kill 3 in Gaza; six Israelis stabbed in Jerusalem

Rabin talks tough to soldiers in Gaza, but tells Knesset security lies in peace talks

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Israeli soldiers Monday shot and killed at least three Palestinians including an 11-year-old mentally retarded boy in the occupied Gaza Strip, and a Palestinian stabbed five Israeli students and their teacher in West Jerusalem, reports said.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin rebuffed demands for tougher measures following the stabbing in the school, saying the Palestinians are waging a popular uprising that can only end through peace talks.

Mr. Rabin told Israeli they had no choice but to absorb the punches, do more to defend themselves, and put their faith in the U.S.-brokered peace talks.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin also talked tough when he visited soldiers in the Gaza Strip

Monday.

"It must be made clear to the Palestinians they will achieve nothing from us through terror and violence," he told reporters as he toured the strip.

But the young conscripts and reservists in the cauldron of Palestinian revolt doubted Mr. Rabin could keep his promise to stem a wave of Arab-Israeli violence.

"The people here hate our very eyes, and nothing will change until we fence off Gaza, make a gate in the fence, and get out," said 42-year-old reservist Andur Zimmerman.

"The prime minister can come here for four hours or four years, and Gaza will stay the same hell," added a 20-year-old infantryman as Mr. Rabin left his camp.

Other soldiers were also sceptical that Mr. Rabin, a former general, could curb the surge of

violence sparked by his December expulsion to Lebanon of 415 suspected members of Hamas and other militant groups.

Israelis have killed 67 Arabs and Arabs have killed 12 Israelis since the expulsion.

Most of the violence has stemmed from Gaza, prompting calls by members of Mr. Rabin's coalition government to pull out of the overcrowded strip.

"Rabin can break their bones, he can have us shoot them like dogs, or he can have us coddle them, give them all cars and houses — nothing will help," said Zimmerman, who has done nine tours of reserve duty in Gaza since 1974.

Zimmerman was in a southern Gaza refugee camp in early 1988 when Mr. Rabin as defence minister ordered troops to break

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Yeltsin camp asserts gaining support, hits constitution court

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Boris Yeltsin's spokesman Monday accused the chief justice of prematurely siding with parliament in its effort to impeach him, and the president issued a decree placing Russian media under his protection.

The Kremlin moves came as Russia's constitutional court convened to discuss Mr. Yeltsin's declaration of emergency powers and the power struggle between the president and the parliament. The court failed to reach an immediate decision.

If the court rules against Mr. Yeltsin, the Congress of People's Deputies, the highest legislative body, could move to impeach him

for breaching the constitution.

In his latest bid to thwart chief rival Ruslan Khasbulatov, the parliament speaker, Mr. Yeltsin Monday placed the media under his protection and ordered the interior minister to take "necessary measures" to defend state television, radio and information agencies.

On March 13, at the end of the emergency session of the Congress of People's Deputies, Mr. Khasbulatov directed the Supreme Soviet legislature to prepare laws to put media under parliamentary control.

A dissenting cabinet member on Monday left the government. Justice Minister Nikolai Fyodor-

ov resigned after failing to support Mr. Yeltsin at Sunday's cabinet meeting.

Presidential spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov Monday asserted — without offering evidence — that Mr. Yeltsin has growing public support as he proceeds with plans to hold a referendum April 25, undeterred by criticism from headline law-makers and some of Russia's populace.

Russia plunged into its deepest crisis since the failed August 1991 coup when Mr. Yeltsin declared emergency rule Saturday night and scheduled a referendum to

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French Socialists routed, but picture unrosy for right

PARIS (R) — Official results issued Monday confirmed the humiliating rout of France's ruling Socialists in the first round of general elections and raised the prospect of a giant, potentially unruly right-wing parliamentary majority.

The sheer scale of the victory, described by commentators as a tidal wave, raised concern that the conservative alliance would be unable to maintain its facade of unity and control its maverick groups in parliament.

"We are headed towards an historic majority and problems," Pascal Perraudin, director of the political think-tank French political study centre, told France-Info radio Monday.

The centre-right Union for France (UPF) coalition clinched 39.5 per cent of the vote in the first of two rounds of the elections Sunday and won 78 of the 80 seats decided outright, final Interior Ministry figures showed.

While that was only slightly higher than their score in the first round of last parliamentary elections in 1988, the collapse of the Socialist Party meant the right was poised for total domination of the National Assembly.

Polling institutes forecast the UPF would win 440 to 476 parliamentary seats after next Sunday's run-offs — the largest majority since 1815 when the monarchy was restored after the French revolution, according to

historians.

The Socialists crashed to 17.6 per cent from 34.7 per cent in 1988, failed to win a single seat outright and were set to lose two-thirds of their 276 seats in the outgoing parliament.

Adding the affiliated left radical movement and other left candidates, the socialist bloc totalled a mere 20.3 per cent.

"France has never seen such a huge majority. I think it's dangerous. Democracy can cope with change and the French people clearly voted for change, but it still needs an opposition," Industry Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said, pushing the Socialist

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A plainclothes Israeli policeman clears the way to an ambulance for a Palestinian who was beaten severely by Israelis Monday after he stabbed six Israelis at a high school in West Jerusalem (AFP photo)

Controversy hits draft law on teachers' union

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The failure of the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution to decide on the constitutional status of the teachers' union draft law has left the government with the power to decide the fate of the controversial legislation, the council president said Monday.

"The council could not reach a resolution. The decision is now with the executive authority," Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi, who heads the nine-member council, told the Jordan Times.

"It will be a political decision," he said.

The council voted five to four against the constitutionality of the law, but a majority of legal experts contacted by the Jordan Times said its decision was not binding because it is not supported by a two-thirds majority as required by the law.

The council's decision does not constitute a resolution. The (draft law) is constitutional," prominent lawyer Ibrahim Bakr told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Bakr's argument was supported by another prominent Jordanian lawyer.

"The council's decision (against the constitutionality of the draft law) is not binding," lawyer Walid Abdul Hadi said.

Another lawyer, however, said the council's ruling constitutes a legal dilemma and highlights the necessity of amending the law governing the decisions of the council.

Former Minister of Information Taher Hikmat, a lawyer, said, "On the surface, the (draft law) is unconstitutional" as the majority voted against it.

The council's ruling casts doubts about the credibility of the draft law, he said.

The law was contested on the grounds that it unionises government employees in violation of the Constitution which, according to Mr. Lawzi, gives labourers and not civil servants the right to organise unions.

Mr. Bakr said the decision to refer the draft law to the council was wrong and argued in support of the minority ruling in the council.

The draft law was endorsed by the Lower House of Parliament Sunday but Mr. Lawzi said government had the legal right to withdraw it if it chose so.

Mr. Lawzi said the council would not hold any more meetings on the draft legislation because all attempts to reach a two-thirds majority failed.

The draft legislation is not expected to be tackled by the Upper House during this parliamentary session, however, since the current ordinary session will end on March 31.

If the government does not exercise what Mr. Lawzi said its legal right to withdraw the legislation, the Upper House is expected to reject the House's controversial amendment to article 5 of the draft law which gave teachers the right to stage strikes.

Observers said this amendment is the most alarming provision of the law because a teachers' strike would affect almost one third of society and put tremendous pressure on the government.

"Rush is not required in dealing with this law," Mr. Lawzi said. The educational process should be protected from potential disruption, affecting one million students and their families, he said.

U.S.: 'Imperative' peace talks resume

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Monday it was "imperative" that Arabs and Israelis resume Middle East talks on April 20 or a unique opportunity to make peace could be lost. In a major foreign policy speech in Chicago, Mr. Christopher said: "It is imperative that all sides act to seize this opportunity and return to the negotiating tables in Washington on April 20." "If they do not, the United States is ready to act as a full partner in their efforts," Mr. Christopher said. "If they do not, if they allow this unique chance to slip away, another generation in the Middle East could be lost to an endless cycle of confrontation and, eventually, war." The talks were suspended last December when Israel expelled 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon. Palestinians have demanded the speedy return of the expelled as a condition for rejoining the peace talks. Arab foreign ministers are due to meet on March 28 in Damascus to decide whether to accept the invitation and a Palestinian delegation is expected in Washington next week for talks with Mr. Christopher.

King deplores Israel's anti-Palestinian steps

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has deplored Israel's "crimes against the Palestinian people under its rule and inhuman policies that flagrantly violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, which provides for the protection of civilians during conflicts."

"Perhaps one of the most distinct examples of such policies is the uprooting of 400 Palestinians from their land that has created major difficulties in the path of the ongoing peace process," King Hussein said in a message he sent to the United Nations on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In the message, addressed to the chairman of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the King said that Israel's expulsion of the Palestinians had also obstructed attempts for coexistence, mod-

eration and tolerance in this region.

"Since the principles regarding racial discrimination are the same, condoning aggression and racism in a certain area is nothing but an encouragement for this practice anywhere else," the King said.

Selectivity, he said, "does not only tend to weaken the determination and the faith and the will to work towards creating a better world dominated by peace, cooperation and moderation but also harms the credibility of those institutions which are in charge of collective international action."

"Observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is an expression on the part of the world community to combat that resented policy and a show of determination for collective action to

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Palestinians upbeat over American letter; Husseini due in U.S.

By Wafa Amr
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Palestinian delegation headed by Faisal Husseini, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), will visit Washington this week to hold talks with American officials on the Middle East peace process and the deadlock resulting from Israel's expulsion of Palestinians in December.

Another equally important Palestinian objective of the visit would be to secure better terms of reference in the peace talks, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said Monday.

According to Yasser Abed Rabbo, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the Information Department of the organisation, the delegation's visit comes in response to an

American message to the PLO.

Mr. Abed Rabbo, who left Amman for Tunis Monday after a two-day visit, could not provide more details of the American message, which was received by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas and Mr. Husseini in Morocco on Friday.

PLO officials who spoke to the Jordan Times from Tunis on Monday sounded more optimistic after the receipt of the message, and voiced hope that Washington was slowly coming around to meet some of the key demands that the Palestinians have tabled as a precondition for their attendance at the next round of peace talks scheduled to begin in Washington on April 20.

Mr. Husseini, who arrived here from Tunis Monday, also sounded

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Palestinians say Israeli pullout from Gaza Strip unlikely, but debate issue

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip is not expected to materialise in the near future despite a heated debate in Israeli political circles and Palestinian politicians, officials from the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Hamas say.

Calls by members of the Israeli parliament and cabinet for a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip intensified after a marked increase in violence from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide.

Israeli politicians appear to have less territorial attachment to the strip, which houses about 800,000 Palestinians, over half of whom are refugees — than the West Bank and Jerusalem. The Israelis say in

"corridor dialogue" with the Palestinian negotiating team to the peace talks that they would be willing to dismantle settlements and "leave (Gaza) over night."

"The Palestinian negotiating team was told in no uncertain terms in round six of the talks that the Israelis were ready to leave Gaza, lock stock and barrel," a senior Amman-based advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team told the Jordan Times.

Speculating why the Israelis may be eager to implement such a move, the advisor said: "The Gaza Strip is a trouble-some area, because it is poor and overpopulated with refugees."

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the advisor said the

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Islamist push against alcohol gains ground, but law unlikely before 1994

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A controversial campaign spearheaded by Islamist deputies in Parliament to ban alcohol in Jordan on religious grounds appears to be making headway, but a law to impose the prohibition is unlikely to come into effect during the term of the current Islamist-dominated Lower House.

Manoeuvring by the conservative but secular government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shakir seems to have preempted immediate parliamentary debate and approval of a draft law on prohibiting production and distribution of a alcoholic beverages, but the issue could be picked up by the next Parliament, which will be elected

later this year.

The government will fulfill its constitutional obligation by presenting the draft legislation to the Lower House before the end of the current ordinary session of Parliament on March 31. But the catch is, according to government insiders, there will be little time left for the House to discuss the draft legislation before it recesses.

And, if the Muslim Brotherhood-led Islamist bloc in Parliament wants to press the point and act upon the draft law, then it will have to do so in an extraordinary session of the legislative authority, an unlikely prospect as things stood one week before the end of the ordinary session.

Even in the unlikely course that Parliament is convened in

an extraordinary session, the House would be limited to discussing the topics specified in a royal decree issued in line with a government recommendation, which, for all practical purposes, is sure to exclude the draft law on alcohol.

It is an almost foregone conclusion that the draft law will pass if it is put to vote on the House floor now since very few deputies would like to be seen as "un-Islamic" by voting against banning alcohol, particularly in an election year.

Indicative of the deputies' trends and political motivations were the facts that at least 11 deputies present in the country chose not to attend the Feb. 19, 1992 session of the House which voted to recommend the ban on alcohol, and nine of the 63 who did attend

the debate on the issue slipped away before the vote was taken.

Among the few lawmakers who dared to speak out in the open against the Brotherhood-inspired motion were leftist Mohammad Fares Tarawneh and Fares Nabulsi.

According to a former prime minister, who preferred anonymity, the move by the Islamists is "psychological pressure."

"The writing was on the wall since the (November 89) elections which created a legislative powerbase for the Brotherhood," he told the Jordan Times.

"The key element in the equation is clear: Very few Muslim deputies will stand up in Parliament and say out loud that they do not favour banning alcohol. Over and above

the political considerations and arguments against adopting such a stand, they also have to keep in mind that they would be leaving the door open to be branded an apostate or unfaithful."

The vote in favour of the motion imposed a constitutional commitment on the government to prepare a draft law and present it to the House before the end of the immediately following regular session of Parliament.

Mr. Mbeideen, an independent Islamist member of the Lower House, would not make a definite comment on whether or not the draft law would be presented to the House before March 31.

"Let us say that the government will live up to its constitutional and fulfil its constitution-

al obligation," he said.

But, said an official source, "the government will definitely present the law to the House before the end of the current session, they (the deputies) will have no time to discuss it."

Asked whether it meant that the government had charted such a course of events with the predetermined certainty that the law would not see light in the present Lower House, the official said: "You can make your own deductions."

The finalised version of the draft law has to pass through the Council of Ministers before being presented to the House. The only regular session of the Cabinet scheduled before March 31 is on Saturday and it is likely that the law would be passed then, but it would reach the House most probably on

Monday, when Parliament holds its final session before recess.

The internal statute of the House demands that all deputies should have received copies of draft laws 24 hours ahead of debate on the floor and that every piece of legislation is referred to the Judiciary Committee for its observations and recommendations.

"Unless the House chooses to disregard the usual procedure of referring all draft laws to its Judiciary Committee and hold a marathon session to debate and vote on the draft law, there is little possibility of the legislation getting approved before the term of the current Parliament expires," noted a parliamentary

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U.S. withdraws forces from south Somali town

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — The United States has withdrawn the quick reaction force it sent to the southern Somali town of Kismayu after an outbreak of fighting last week.

U.S. military spokesman Captain Ed Loomis said the last of the 500 soldiers left the town at 4 a.m. Monday in a convoy heading northwards. Thirteen helicopters have also gone.

U.S. forces which had been in Kismayu before the fighting — an infantry company of 80 to 100 men and a military police platoon of 20 to 30 — have also withdrawn, he said.

The withdrawal leaves the whole of the Kismayu region in the hands of about 900 Belgian soldiers.

The town of Kismayu, a large port 400 kilometres southwest of the capital Mogadishu, has been quiet since Mijaratene and Marehan clansmen drove out militia loyal to warlord Ahmad Omar Jess last Tuesday.

The United States sent the quick reaction force to deter further fighting and to help a military judge investigate the fighting, which violated a ceasefire agreed by all militias.

The investigation was largely a political gesture to Colonel Jess and his ally in Mogadishu, General Mohamed Farah Aided.

Both blamed Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan," son-in-law of deposed dictator Mohamed Said Barre, for the defeat in Kismayu and said the U.S. and Belgian forces should have intervened to preserve the status quo.

The military judge, Colonel Frederick Lorenz, concluded that supporters of General Morgan violated the ceasefire by infiltrating the town on Feb. 22 but that it was impossible to say who started the fighting last Tuesday.

Gen. Aided's group, the Somali National Alliance (SNA), pulled out of a national reconciliation conference in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa last Wednesday because of the incident.

Gen. Aided's radio in Mogadishu said Monday that the SNA had asked the United Nations to extend the conference by two days to make up for time lost in a separate but equally inconclusive investigation by all the Somali factions.

The conference was holding a full meeting Monday morning. Capt. Loomis told Reuters that 50 to 100 armed Somalis on Sunday attacked a convoy of two international red cross trucks carrying food from Kenya to the town of Dohley. Sen. Morgan's current headquarters about 200 kilometres northwest of Kismayu.

The Belgian escort of eight to 10 soldiers was too small to fight them off so the convoy returned to Kenya.

"They're going to reinforce the escort with a platoon of Belgian troops and try to disarm the 50 to 100 Somalis if they can find them," Capt. Loomis said.

"Morgan's forces have been cooperative. In this instance they're working with us," he added.

Lots of weapons

When 2,000 soldiers made a door-to-door search for weapons in Kismayu several weeks ago, it did not take long for the metal detectors to warm up in back

yards, schoolyards and graveyards.

Assault rifles, machineguns and grenades were dug up. Even heavy artillery was uncovered.

"Anywhere you can wrap a weapon in cloth and bury it, it's there," said U.S. Army Brigadier General Greg Lile, who was forced to return to Kismayu last week with reinforcements when violence flared up again.

At least 10 people were killed last Tuesday and 51 others sought treatment for gunshot wounds. It provided stark evidence of how prevalent weapons have become in a country plagued by years of civil war.

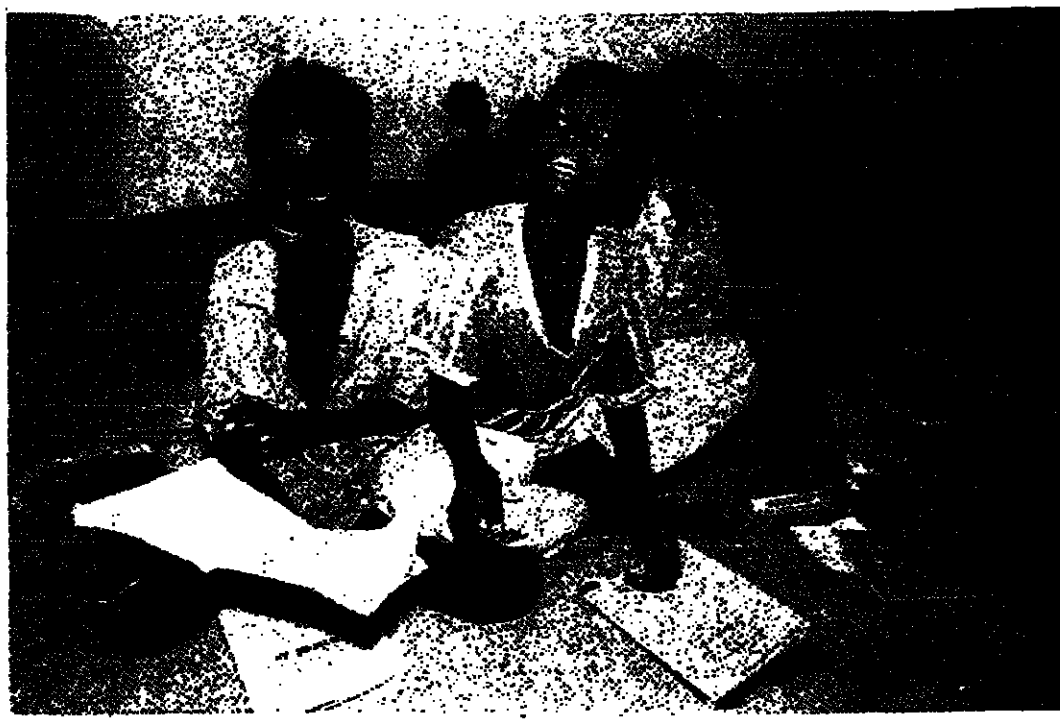
Some officials have urged total disarmament before the United States turns over control of Operation Restore Hope to the United Nations, expected around May 1.

But some of Somalia's warring factions have argued that giving up their weapons leaves them open to attacks by bandits or rivals.

In the first months after the U.S.-led military coalition arrived Dec. 9 to safeguard food convoys to the starving, troops confiscated 5,525 small arms, 92 heavy machine-guns and more than 1.3 million rounds of ammunition, along with tanks and armoured personnel carriers.

Marine Col. Fred Peck would not even hazard a guess as to what percentage of the country's overall arsenal is still out there.

"I think we have made a dent," Col. Peck said. "The important point is making people keep them at home or buried. They will get used to not carrying them around."



Somali children are back in school with the help of U.S. Marines who pay the teachers (AFP photo)

Algerians march against 'terrorism'

ALGIERS (R) — Hundreds of thousands of Algerians marched from Martyrs' Square in the capital Monday in a powerful rejection of violence and "terrorism" blamed on Muslim fundamentalists.

The "you-you's" of women mixed with chants of "Down with terrorism" as young and old streamed through sunlit streets towards May 1 Square.

Other similar marches were being held nationwide, called by politicians, trade unionists, employers, doctors, women's group and other associations.

In Algiers, the official news agency APS estimated the crowd at "nearly a million." Marchers took 90 minutes to pass. No incidents were reported.

Cries of "Neither Tehran, nor Khartoum — (an) Algerian Algeria" and "People and army with you, freedom fighter," — a reference to the war of independence against the French — echoed through the streets.

Iran, with Sudan, is widely seen as backing fundamentalists who are blamed for killing some 300 members of the security forces in the past year.

More than 600 people have died in the violence, and last week a former education minister, a doctor and a senior official were killed.

"Why have they killed them? They are fathers of families. We are against the terrorists who are killing the police, the gendarmes," said 17-year-old Lydia, one of seven young women hold-

ing a placard against fundamentalism.

Another woman added: "The doctor was well-known in the Casbah and helped many poor people."

Women wearing veils mixed with others in jeans or dresses accompanied by children in push-chairs or on foot.

Mohamed Baza, a grey-bearded 85-year-old resident of Algiers, said: "We are here to say this must stop."

Monday's march was the first mass public demonstration since the funeral of assassinated President Mohamed Boudiaf last July.

The government authorised the marches "to allow citizens to express their reprobation and determination to oppose terrorist assassinations," it said in a statement carried by the official news agency APS.

Pictures of Mr. Boudiaf mixed with countless Algerian flags and placards demanding "No pardon for terrorists" and "Glory to the martyrs of modern Algeria."

Shops closed and security was low key as marchers assembled behind placards and national flags.

Just before the crowd started its march, APS reported that five gendarmes were wounded Sunday when they came under fire from "an armed terrorist group estimated at a dozen people."

The group of nine gendarmes fought off the attackers, two or three of whom were believed to have been wounded.

The interior minister mean-

while said in a statement on APS that more than 70,000 Algerians had handed their hunting weapons to the police and gendarmes for safekeeping in the seven areas covered by a night curfew.

Algeria is under a state of emergency imposed in February 1992 after the cancellation of a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a commanding first round lead.

The party was later banned and Interior Minister Mohamed Hardi said in a newspaper interview Sunday there would never be a pardon for terrorists and criminals, including those who commanded them, "that is, the ex-FIS."

In the second part of his interview Monday, Mr. Hardi blamed the FIS for Algeria's current situation, saying that the elections had been "manipulated" and the FIS had exploited many Algerians by trying to "present the coming of an Islamic state as the solution to their problems."

"We are against terrorism and the fundamentalists," said one young marcher. Another added: "We are here in solidarity with the families of victims of terrorism."

Trades union leader Abdul Hak Benhamouda told the crowd in front of the UGTA headquarters in May 1 Square:

"This march is the spring of the new Algeria against those who wanted to take us back to the dark centuries... We are ready to sacrifice 1.5 million martyrs not to accept Iran here."

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Algeria is under a state of emergency imposed in February 1992 after the cancellation of a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a commanding first round lead.

The party was later banned and Interior Minister Mohamed Hardi said in a newspaper interview Sunday there would never be a pardon for terrorists and criminals, including those who commanded them, "that is, the ex-FIS."

In the second part of his interview Monday, Mr. Hardi blamed the FIS for Algeria's current situation, saying that the elections had been "manipulated" and the FIS had exploited many Algerians by trying to "present the coming of an Islamic state as the solution to their problems."

Amnesty accuses Egyptian police of shoot-to-kill policy

CAIRO (AP) — Amnesty International urged Egyptian authorities Monday to investigate the killing of at least 20 Muslim extremist suspects as a result of an alleged shoot to kill police strategy.

The London-based organisation said human rights have suffered "serious deterioration" during a government crackdown against militants trying to turn Egypt into an Islamic theocracy.

An Amnesty International statement accused the government of giving security authorities an "official license to kill with impunity."

Major General Al Shamy, the Interior Minister's spokesman, denied police went into confrontations with extremists ordered to shoot to kill. But Gen. Shamy said police remain on full alert, and will be especially so during the Eid Al Fitr feast that starts Wednesday.

"We do not start shooting first. The extremists start shooting, and we have to answer back," Gen. Shamy told the Associated Press. "When they shoot dead an officer, we have to respond."

By Associated Press count, police have shot dead 28 suspected militants since the beginning of March. This figure includes nine extremists killed in a shootout in the southern resort of Aswan on March 9 and 10 in the southern town of Assiut last Wednesday.

In the same period, nine policemen and three bystanders have been killed during police raids.

Amnesty International said that since early 1980, "a pattern has emerged of leading figures and members of Islamic opposition groups being killed by members of the security forces."

The high number of deaths and the escalated violence worry many Egyptians, even those

angry about deadly blows extremists have dealt Egypt's important tourism industry. Of 132 people killed since the violence escalated about 15 months ago, most were suspected extremists.

"Amnesty international is concerned that the security forces in Egypt appear to be pursuing a shoot to kill policy... in the latest of the government's sweeping measures to crush militant Islamic groups," the statement said.

It said a senior Interior Ministry official was quoted last Thursday as saying police "have been instructed to shoot to kill militants who resist security forces."

Such comments, Amnesty said, "clearly breach international standards relating to the use of lethal force. This looks like an official license to kill with impunity."

Amnesty urged Egyptian authorities to "conduct an urgent review" of its policy and to carry out "prompt and impartial investigations" into all the killings.

The Amnesty statement also denounced "mass arbitrary arrests, torture, long-term administrative detention, unfair political trials before military courts resulting in death sentences and killing by security forces."

It said Amnesty also has condemned "deliberate and arbitrary killings" by Islamic extremists.

In a related development, an Egyptian court sentenced Khaleel Mustafa Thabet to one year in prison at hard labour for stabbing three Russian tourists, two women and a man, in the Mediterranean port of Port Said last October.

Mr. Thabet told the court he was a religious Muslim but not an extremist. He said he was angered by the tourists' revealing clothes as they stood taking pictures in front of a mosque. The women wore shorts.

Iran Mujahadeen pursue effort to befriend U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Mujahadeen-e-Khalq of Iran has bought time on CNN this week to run one minute ads showing alleged human rights violations and terrorism by Iran and describing the opposition group's military might and political agenda.

The ads invite viewers to join in a rally outside the White House Friday, followed by a march to the capitol along with thousands of Iranian supporters being bused and flown to Washington.

The Mujahadeen, with its skillful public relations machine and persistent courting of media and politicians, has sought to make its mark on Washington for almost a decade.

With a new administration, its leadership believes the time has never been better to gain American sympathies and support.

If indeed, President Bill Clinton keeps his promise to promote human rights and democracy around the world, said Mujahadeen chief foreign spokesman Mohammad Mohabessin, the only way to do it is to crack down on the clerics ruling Iran.

And the only viable alternative to those rulers, Mr. Mohabessin said in an interview, is the Mujahadeen. The organisation, the largest member of a coalition called the National Council of Resistance, has had thousands of its supporters inside Iran hung or jailed.

But the United States has always regarded the Mujahadeen as a terrorist organisation because it killed several Americans when it was fighting against the U.S.-backed Shah who ruled Iran until he was overthrown in 1979.

The Mujahadeen contends the killings were carried out by factions who have long split away from the organisation, and it has

sought persistently to reverse Washington's view.

The Reagan and Bush administrations shunned the group, partly because of its past and partly out of reluctance to antagonise Iran with whom it sought at various times an improved relationship.

But Mujahadeen leaders say none of these policies diminished Tehran's aggressiveness towards the West. And they are hopeful the new administration may finally see it their way.

That hope has been fuelled by U.S. allegations that Iran is behind a spreading campaign of terrorism against Israel and Arab governments such as Egypt. In fact, the State Department issued a statement recently calling Iran "the most dangerous state sponsor of terrorism."

These accusations have found a new resonance among Americans since the World Trade Centre bombing last month, the most serious act of international terrorism on U.S. soil in 17 years and one allegedly carried out by Islamic radicals.

But administration officials, who have undertaken a review of U.S. policy towards Iran, predict recognition for the Mujahadeen is unlikely — especially if the wave of recent attacks continues.

Nonetheless, the Clinton administration quietly has been urging its allies to isolate Iran — by spreading the word that Iran is a bad credit risk and should not get foreign loans with which to stock its arsenals, said one official who spoke on condition of not being identified by name.

The current crop of foreign makers — including Secretary of State Warren Christopher and National Security Adviser Tony Lake — has good reason to be wary of Iran. They all served under President Jimmy Carter.

Doctor given 15 years in Moroccan sex case

RABAT (AP) — A gynaecologist has been stripped of his medical license and sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in a sex scandal involving police abuse of more than 500 women.

Dr. Driss Lahlou is one of more than a dozen people, including several police officials, to be convicted in a case that has horrified this country.

A death sentence has been handed to Police Commissioner Haj Mohammad Mustafa Tabet, convicted two weeks ago of coercing more than 500 women and girls into sex acts and videotaping them.

A court Sunday stiffened a sentence against Dr. Lahlou that had previously been only two years plus a \$110 fine after two women came forward and accused Dr. Lahlou of various crimes.

They included complicity in rape, performing forced abortions, and reconstructing the maidenheads of raped girls for Mr. Tabet. Other details of his involvement were not disclosed.

Under the sentence, Dr. Lahlou will lose his medical licence for five years.

Prosecutors had requested Dr. Lahlou receive a 20-year prison term and the permanent revocation of his right to practice medicine.

Mr. Tabet and several other police officers were sentenced in connection with luring hundreds of women and girls into an apartment Mr. Tabet kept for sexual exploits.

Investigators found 100 video cassettes made over a period of weeks with cameras hidden in the bedroom walls. Some of the tapes were apparently distributed and sold.

Mr. Tabet intends to appeal the death sentence.

Somali shilling - a war currency on the rise

By Sue Fleming
Reuters

MOGADISHU — The Somali shilling is a currency on the rise in a street market where money traders keep cash in cardboard boxes and warning shots bring unruly dealing to a halt.

With no central bank — it collapsed after civil war began in 1991 — and no money market regulations, black marketeers in Mogadishu are doing a roaring business.

Since the arrival of U.S.-led troops last December to protect famine relief looted by gunmen, hard cash has fattened the wallets of many currency traders.

The influx of 28,000 soldiers, aid agencies and journalists has dramatically increased the supply of dollars in the country, pushing up the price of the local shilling by more than 30 per cent against the U.S. currency.

"Before the Americans came the dollar traded at about 7,000 shillings, but now it gets about 5,000 shillings," a money dealer in the capital's hectic Bakara market told Reuters.

At the height of the civil war, the shilling nosedived to about 9,200 shillings to the dollar, the trader said.

The hub of the money exchange is in the centre of Bakara market. Heavily guarded by men with AK-47 rifles, traders operate in the open air, hauling wads of dollars and shillings from cardboard boxes.

When the crowd gets out of hand, gunmen fire shots in the air. Thieves are severely dealt with.

"If we find a thief we punish him and if he does not listen, we just shoot him," declared the chairman of a nine-member money market committee, Said Shardi Raaga.

Mr. Raaga, who said he was a former driver for the Iraqi embassy in Mogadishu, said about 200 traders were "registered" with his body. Each paid about \$50 a day for a space in the pit.

As chairman, Mr. Raaga sets an opening price for the dollar at 8 a.m. daily and a closing price at dusk. The market is open seven days a week, but closes early on Friday to enable Muslims to go to mosque.

On Sunday, the shilling opened at 5,300 to the dollar, just 10 shillings off its closing price Saturday. After four hours of trade, it had strengthened to 5,250.

"The market operates on a supply and demand basis. There were too many dollars this morning, so the shilling strengthened," said one dealer.

Small banks have sprouted up in areas near the central trading pit to fill the gap left by the demise of the formal banking sector.

Mahab Mohammad Issa, who was in banking before the war broke out, has two safes in his small banking shack, tucked away behind the open market stalls.

Mr. Issa does not keep ledgers and clients do not get bank statements. When a customer hands over money, Mr. Issa counts it and pastes a label on the bundle indicating the amount.

"When the customer comes back, we count the money again to make sure it is all there. I don't pay any interest," Mr. Issa said.

Mr. Issa told Reuters the

new law was not constitutional and he had filed a lawsuit challenging it.

"You cannot practice democracy with force," Mr. Ettman said. "Voting is and must be a personal option."

Salama Ahmad Salama, managing editor of Al Ahram, said the new law had pushed people to vote.

"Many who used to boycott in the past are taking part today and this is an encouraging sign," Mr. Salama told Reuters.

"My only reservation on the implementation of the new law is that it makes it a condition that elections must be supervised by judges, which means journalists are not trusted to carry out their own elections," Mr. Salama said.

Mohammad Abdul Kaddous, a widely-respected Islamist who was running for the board, commented: "We oppose the new law because it is imposed on us."

"The new law violates human rights regulations and is opposed to democracy," he said. "Members of any syndicate should have a say on the laws binding them."

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Egypt's Al Ahram editor elected head of press

CAIRO (R) — Ibrahim Nafeh, editor of Egypt's establishment newspaper Al Ahram, was elected head of the press syndicate under a new law making it harder for Muslim fundamentalists to control professional unions.

The results of the voting which took place Sunday were published in Egyptian newspaper Monday.

Mr. Nafeh won the voting by a big margin of 1,787 votes against his rival Mohammad Ettman, a magazine journalist, who got 318 votes.

The new law — part of an overall plan by the government to combat the increasing influence of fundamentalists — requires at least 50 per cent of a syndicate's members to vote in an election for it to be considered valid.

Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, the main political opposition to the government of President Hosni Mubarak, have won control of Egypt's main syndicates in recent elections often with very low turnouts.

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U.S., Iraq both press for public meeting on sanctions

NICOSIA (AP) — For different reasons, both the United States and Iraq favour holding a public U.N. Security Council meeting to discuss whether sanctions against Baghdad should continue, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported Monday.

The weekly newsletter, published in Nicosia, said it understood the two countries were pushing for the U.N. meetings, which convene every two months, to be held publicly.

It did not say who its sources were, but the newsletter has good economic and diplomatic contacts throughout the region.

Until now, the decision as to whether sanctions against Baghdad should continue always has been discussed behind closed doors. The next meeting is set for March 29.

MEES said the United States favoured an open session in order to give it a chance to reaffirm its policy that sanctions should be maintained.

Mr. Ettman told Reuters the



Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday chats with children at the Social Institute for the Rehabilitation and Care of Orphans (SIRCO) in Amman (Petra photo)

Queen visits children's centres on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the occasion of Eid Al Fitr, Her Majesty Queen Noor, Monday visited the Social Institute for the Rehabilitation and Care of Orphans (SIRCO) and the Child Care Home.

The institute, located near Al Ahli Club, houses 74 boys and girls, and the Child Care Home, in Bayader Wadi Al Seer, is home to 49 boys.

Both institutions are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to accommodate those who are in need of their services.

In the spirit of the Eid, the Queen delivered clothes, shoes and educational games and toys to both centres.

At SIRCO, Her Majesty was received by Minister of Social Development Amin Awad Mashagbeh, and by Director and Deputy-Director of the institute, Aida Awamleh and Rabih Ghazi.

In a speech before the Queen, Dr. Mashagbeh said the SIRCO plans to expand its services to cover 100 children.

SIRCO provides food and full accommodation to the orphans who are cared for by 14 female teachers and supervisors, the minister said.

Upon directives from His

Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and in light of SIRCO's success, the ministry plans to set up a similar institute in the Mafraq region to accommodate 50 to 75 children.

After inspecting the institute, the Queen moved to Bayader Wadi Seer where she visited the Child Care Home and listened to a briefing on its functions.

Receiving the Queen at the Child Care Home was its Director, Amal Faghr. Queen Noor was accompanied on both visits by Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein and Princess Alia Al Faisal.

Stitches that evoke nostalgia

By Stephanie Genkin
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For many visitors, the latest exhibition at the French Cultural Centre will be a journey into memories.

Displaying a sample of her private collection of traditional Arab costumes, Widad Kamil Kavar seeks to create an atmosphere of nostalgia. The bulk of her needle-work treasures includes relics from the villages of Palestine.

Mrs. Kavar's impressive exhibition, the first in Jordan in 20 years, is merely a glimpse into her expansive collection of over 1,000 Palestinian costumes.

In addition to her appreciation of the workmanship and labour involved in each piece, Mrs. Kavar prizes each costume for the memories they evoke.

As a collector and exhibitor, she strives to preserve Palestinian culture and tradition.

The brightly coloured and intricately designed dresses, some dating back 100 years, highlight the diverse and rich development of embroidery as an art form.

The exhibition emphasises the variation of patterns and symbols from village to village and the individuality of the dresses designed in the same region.

No two dresses are alike.

The majority of dresses from Hebron, Bethlehem, Jaffa and Ramallah are cotton- or silk-based material with vibrant stitch-work reflecting the traditional designs of each region.

Two outstanding costumes featured at the exhibition include a pair of velvet wedding gowns with unusual embroidery adorning the sleeves, sides and bodice.

The dresses are meant to be more than ornate; through design and colours they convey a message about the individual wearing the garment.

In addition to identifying the woman's village, the costumes may also indicate marital status, for example.

On such dress on display at the exhibition is from Sinai. The predominance of blue stitched throughout the bottom of the gown meant that the woman wearing it was available for marriage.

But upon marriage, additional colours were added around the periphery of the blue design to show that she was no longer single.

Despite the enormity of her collection, perhaps the largest privately-owned one of its kind, Mrs. Kavar knows the history and story behind each and every piece.

A visit to the exhibition will be enhanced by a guided tour from the expert herself, who is enthusiastic to share her knowledge with the public.

Mrs. Kavar first became interested in the traditional costumes of Palestine about 40 years ago, after a friend offered her a couple of old dresses and wedding gowns.

She was immediately taken by the worn threads bearing the memories of a culture under siege.

Cherishing the skill and tradition behind these pieces, Mrs. Kavar decided to devote her energies to collecting the costumes of the various regions of Palestine.

After 1967, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, many women were selling their traditional dresses for much needed money.

Seeking to protect the endangered culture, Mrs. Kavar, expanded her cherished collection, which she primarily exhibits in Europe.

After a successful exhibition at the Arab Institute in Paris, Mrs. Kavar published a book providing extensive background and history of the traditional costumes of Palestine and Jordan which includes photographs depicting part of her remarkable collection.

The book is published in French and is entitled "Memoire de Soie," which is a play on words. Translated directly it means "Memories of Silk," referring to the base material of many of the dresses. But the French word "soi" means yourself.

The book and exhibition targeted to Palestinians, though by no means exclusively, seek to rekindle a nostalgia for village life in Palestine.

The exhibition of the traditional costumes will be on display at the French Cultural Centre until March 30.

Eid sales are down, say merchants

By Sausan Ghosheh and Samir Barhoum
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As merchants complain of low sales, shoppers complain of the increases in the price of popular commodities during the Eid Al Fitr Feast, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Downtown, streets were crowded with people searching to buy clothes and sweets in preparation for the feast, but few shoppers seemed to have made any purchases.

The Eid season is considered to be one of the periods when business flourishes for merchants. Yet, most merchants confirmed that their sales dropped between 40 and 70 per cent compared to last year.

"Every year is worse than the one before" said Hassan Khalil, a toy store owner.

"There is a huge difference between the quantity of products sold last year and those sold this year" said Talal Subhi, a boutique owner.

Most boutique owners attributed the drop in sales to the timing of the Eid, which this year falls between two seasons.

They said they were confused whether to display winter or summer clothes at their shops, and believed the same was true of the people.

"We brought winter clothes assuming that this year would be as cold as the year before, but it was not. People now prefer to wait to buy summer clothes," said Samer Darwazah, a boutique owner.

Another reason for the decreased sales, according to merchants, was the economic crisis affecting most Jordanians.

"This view was supported by two shoppers, Abu Nihad and his wife Umm Nihad, who said they have bought new clothes for their eight children, and this has left them no money to buy any for themselves for the Eid."

In addition they said they are not thinking of buying sweets for the feast, instead, Umm Nihad might prepare some at home.

Abu Khaled, a cashier at a confectionary, said people now-

days "tend to be economical and make sweets at home rather than spending their money in the market."

Meanwhile, reputable confectionaries deny that they have been greatly affected by the current economic situation, saying that the quality of products will always attract customers regardless of the financial situation.

To further emphasize the decline in the standard of living of some families, Mr. Subhi described an incident where a man came to his boutique with his 10 children to buy clothes.

"The man began to cry in the shop because his salary was only JD 100, which he said he uses for paying his monthly expenses, leaving him nothing for the Eid expenses," Mr. Subhi said.

Customers perceive the main reason for the drop in sales to be the price hikes by merchants prior to the Eid, a charge denied by all merchants.

Jamal Salah, a boutique owner said "It is irrational to raise prices in such a season because a good merchant believes in selling more for less."

Mr. Salah explained that "customers believe that we raise the prices because of stories merchants tell them. In order to sell the products for higher prices, we claim that during the Eid they were or will be higher."

Along with other merchants, Mr. Salah complained of the small profit they are earning.

Most merchants attribute the sense among customers that prices have increased because people's basic expenses have risen while their incomes remain the same.

This money shortage has resulted in some parents buying for the children and neglecting themselves. A customer said he bought new clothes for his son, but for the first Eid in his life he bought none for himself.

Store owners estimate that up to 70 per cent of their sales were for children's items.

In addition, shoe sales declined, because customers say they cannot afford them.

Merchants have told the Jordan Times that they hope their sales would improve in the upcoming days, otherwise this will



Eid Al Fitr is considered one of the highest selling seasons by merchants



be an indication that sales this year will be extremely low. If sales are low during the Eid, they will be low throughout the whole year, boutique owners said.

More bomb shelters planned for Amman

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Amman Municipality announced Monday that it was planning to ensure sufficient bomb shelters in the capital in cooperation with the Civil Defence Department (CDD).

Finding that shelters have become an essential element in a building, Amman Mayor Mohammad Bashir said that persons wishing to build a house are required to include the construction of a shelter as a prerequisite to obtaining a building licence from the municipality.

President of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) Husni Abu Ghaida said that there is a decades-old law requiring each house to have its own shelter, but the law was often not enforced.

Once home-owners had paid the fee for the licence, which included the prerequisite to build a shelter, many went ahead and built homes without such shelters, Mr. Abu Ghaida explained.

Also, many home-owners who built the shelters used them instead as store rooms, he added.

Mr. Abu Ghaida said that since the beginning of 1993, the concerned authorities have been trying to implement a new building code requiring all buildings or a set of buildings to have shelters of their own.

But he said that the regulations have never been applied and more discussions among the concerned authorities are to be held after Eid Al Fitr to reach a final agreement.

The mayor told the Jordan Times that it was true that a law has always existed requiring homes to have their own shelters, but he said, the municipality's main aim now is to consult with the CDD on ways to reduce their cost by building shelters that can benefit whole neighbourhoods instead.

"Should we reach a decision of any kind, the JEA would be asked to become involved; but at this stage, this matter mainly concerns the municipality and the CDD," Mr. Bashir said.

Inspections of homes around the capital revealed that many of the shelters were being used for other purposes, the mayor said.

In its drive to reduce the financial burdens on the public, the municipality has been implementing measures to improve and modernise its services, Mr. Bashir said.

The mayor said that since the start of 1993, the municipality adopted a measure by which fees for services will be shared by several beneficiaries and not borne by only one household, in order to reduce the cost to individual homes.

In this regard, he explained, the fees for building retaining walls, stairs and pavement are to be shared by the whole neighbourhood rather than being paid by those living closest to these structures.

Mayor Bashir said he sent the CDD a note requesting a meeting to be convened by senior officials from the municipality and the civil defence to coordinate process of building shelters.

PSD reports fewer total crimes

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) has reported a drop in the number of crimes of various types in Jordan between March 13 and 19, compared with the previous week.

No murders were reported during this week, and only one was reported the week before, according to a PSD statement.

The number of reported murders also dropped by at least 50 per cent with one case reported, the statement said.

But the report cited an increase in the number of burglaries and car thefts, and said nearly 70 burglary cases were solved through police investigations. Fraud increased slightly to 10

cases, nine of which were solved by the police, it added.

According to the PSD remarkable development was a significant decrease in the number of festive firings: 40 per cent less compared with the previous week.

The PSD has issued a call to the public reminding them that festive firing was dangerous and illegal.

The PSD reported that a university student in Irbid was cleaning his pistol when it accidentally went off injuring him with a bullet wound to the leg.

The statement reported the attempted suicide of a 26-year-

old man who swallowed a large quantity of tranquilizers. The man has been undergoing treatment at Al Bashir Hospital and was reported to be in fair condition.

A 28-year-old woman, said to be suffering from a mental disorder, swallowed a poisonous substance in an unsuccessful suicide attempt, the student added.

According to the PSD, the border police force stopped an attempt to smuggle 9,115 heads of sheep into the country.

The PSD reported no other smuggling or drug trafficking attempts for the period.

French Socialist party routed

(Continued from page 1)

appeal for a fight-back on the second ballot.

Political scientists said the size of the centre-right victory could create problems within the coalition.

"The problem will be to control and impose order," Mr. Perinaud said, noting that minorities within the right could be emboldened by the victory.

Philippe Seguin and Charles Pasqua, rebels within the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) who led the fight against the Maastricht Treaty on European Union last year, have called for a devaluation of the franc to spur growth. They could gain support if recession persists and unemployment mounts further.

Socialists and mainstream conservatives say the franc must be pegged to the German mark to reassure investors, curb inflation and modernise the economy.

Experts said the right's tidal wave victory hid simmering jealousies between the alliance's two pillars.

The RPR with 20.4 per cent is likely to win about 25 more seats

than its partner, the Union for French Democracy (UDF) with 19.1 per cent, boosting its claim to head the government.

RFR leader Jacques Chirac, who headed the last right-wing government in 1986-88, has said he does not want to serve as premier again. Former RFR Finance Minister Edouard Balladur was said to be the leading candidate for prime minister.

But the UDF demanded its share of power. UDF leader Valery Giscard d'Estaing said that if the gap between the two parties was small, the premiership would be "an open question."

The victory will give the right control of the government and both houses of parliament, setting up a bruising duel with Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, who says he plans to stay on until the end of his second mandate in 1995.

The president intends to guide foreign policy, a role implicitly reserved for the head of state under the 1958 constitution, but also to defend social welfare rights, which Socialists claim the right intends to dismantle.

Mr. Mitterrand "cohabited" with the conservatives, led by Mr. Chirac, in 1986-88. But the coming period could be far tougher.

"Cohabitation will be much more difficult," said Calude Estier, a Mitterrand confidant and socialist senate leader.

Stripped of most parliamentary support, Mr. Mitterrand will have to battle the conservatives almost single-handedly to defend the left's policies. "One man alone against the right," read a headline in left-wing newspaper Liberation.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled the Memory of Silk, displaying traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes, shawls, carpets, pottery, copperware, from the Widad Kavar collection — at the French Cultural Centre.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Pakistani president
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent a cable to Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan congratulating him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on Pakistan's national day. King Hussein wished Mr. Khan good health and happiness and the Pakistani people further progress and prosperity. The King Monday also delegated the governor of Amman to convey his condolences to the Awamleh family on the death of Ahmad Al Najdawi.

King depllores Israeli measures

(Continued from page 1)

create a world free of any form of discrimination based on colour, race, language or faith and a world dominated by equality, justice and peace."

The day, which is observed annually, was inaugurated by a U.N. General Assembly Resolution in 1966. It honours the memory of the 69 unarmed, peaceful demonstrators, mainly women and children, who were massacred at Sharpeville in South Africa in 1960.

The King said in his message that he appreciated the committee's work in fighting racial discrimination in South Africa and renewed the support of the people and government of Jordan for the continued international efforts aimed at eliminating all

forms of bigotry and racial discrimination.

"We adopt this clear stand out of the conviction that racism is a crime against mankind and human dignity," the King added.

"Our stand conforms with the Islamic faith and teachings which implanted in the hearts of the Jordanian people and the Arab Nation the spirit of tolerance, brotherhood and equality among various races and groups."

The observance of the day, the King said, "is a reaffirmation of the principles of democracy and human rights, and would enhance the hopes and aspirations for a quick elimination of the racial discrimination system in South Africa."

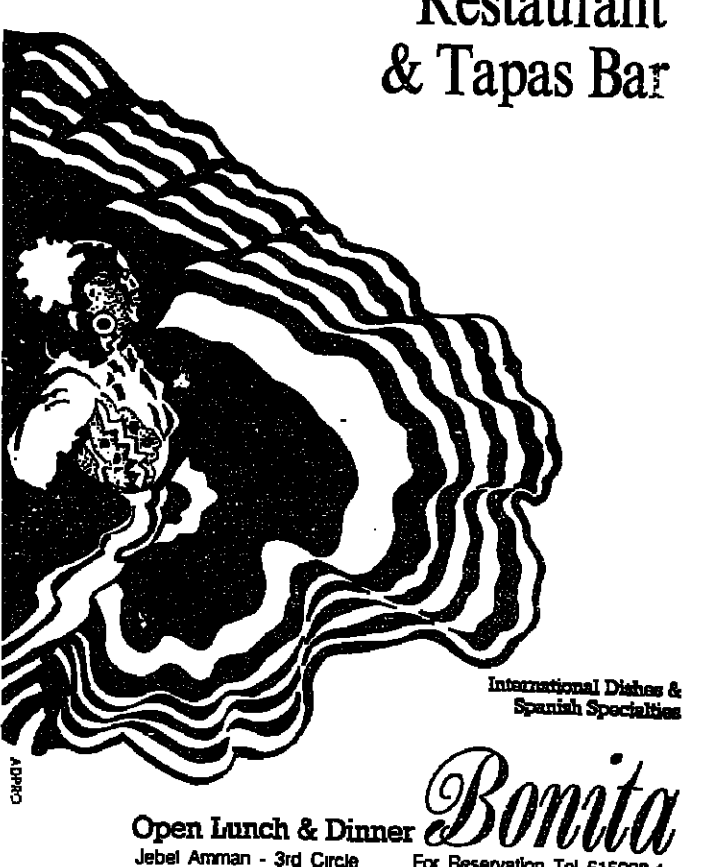
But, he noted, "this optimistic feeling is still marred by the

painful events and resentful practices that have been going on and which are not so much different in essence and form racial discrimination — ethnic fanaticism and extremism."

"The latest positive steps and developments in South Africa since 1990 aiming at renouncing apartheid will create a convenient political climate for a successful national dialogue among various parties in order to create a united democratic society free of all forms of discrimination," he said.

He said such positive steps were a welcome development, "giving encouragement to the world community to pursue efforts for a political settlement and negotiations until the aspired objectives have been fulfilled."

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By Rami G. Khouri

Jordan Times

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Troubles on the Nile

THE WAY the Egyptian regime is handling the threat posed by extremist Islamic groups is a recipe for more violence and a greater confrontation between the authorities and Islamists in general, which might spill over into the whole region of the Middle East. While we do not condone the blood-letting perpetrated by those radical groups against Egyptian targets, tourists and foreign investments, we see the counter-violence committed by the state as counter-productive in many ways.

Certainly, even if the extremist elements in the Egyptian society number 10,000 or 30,000 as the authorities claim, there is no justification for the security forces to shoot at will at worshippers and suspected hideouts.

The killing of extremists or non-extremists will not deter those bent on opposing the regime in Cairo. The fact that the extremists are using ruthless methods in their fight against the state does not justify the latter's use of the same ways.

A recent report by the New York-based Middle East Watch human rights organisation described in disgusting detail the condition of Egyptian jails that have not changed since the late President Anwar Sadat was imprisoned in them by the British authorities in 1946.

The report tells of people, accused of being Muslim extremists, who have languished in those jails for 10 and 15 years without trial or even charges brought against them. Those elements are being tortured and denied any contact with their families or lawyers.

It is a foregone conclusion that Islamic unrest in the Arab and Muslim worlds is the result of failure by successive regimes to address the concerns of the masses. Egypt, the most populous Arab country and that possesses vast resources, including oil and the Suez Canal, has failed to ensure for the majority of its people decent living and for the state its rightful place among nations. Egypt, which led the Arab World in the crucial years of the 1960s, blundered on almost every level, especially on the fronts of war and peace. Neither the war it led in 1967 nor the peace it signed in 1979 provided any solution to the problems faced by its own people or the Arab World in general.

What the Egyptian authorities should be doing, instead of killing its opponents, is to give more freedom and legitimacy to the mainstream Muslim factions, especially the Brotherhood, who can give tremendous help in containing the splinter groups and neutralise their threat.

Egypt should also start addressing the rampant problems that afflict its economy and its gigantic bureaucracy. It should tackle the rampant corruption and also undertake a review of its regional and international roles. In particular Cairo needs to lead a resurgent Arab World into the new era that followed the Gulf war and resulted from the demise of the Soviet Union. It should start by using its clout to rally Arab ranks for a joint Arab stand in the face of the new challenges posed by the new world order.

Egyptian leaders should look at the current conflict on its soil not just with its immediate ramifications and implications. It needs to look at its present dilemma within its true historical context. History should tell Egyptian leaders that their great nation has been in slumber for long and that it is time the giant woke up.

Within such a framework the radicals and extremists of Egypt can be cut to size, if not totally eliminated from the scene.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Monday commented on His Majesty King Hussein's interview with the Chilean magazine, Cosas, describing his views as comprehensive as they covered a wide range of issues of concern to the whole world. Not so many national leaderships have the courage to air the views, as put forth by the King who, the paper said, had touched on the sensitive matters concerning the international community. In his statement, the King was careful to issue a warning against the continuation of the present world policies which tend to overlook the events of the past few years in our region, said the daily. The paper described the King's warning as representing mankind's cry for justice to be established and an end to further deterioration in the world situation. In referring to the duties of the U.N. Security Council, the King emphasised the need for a more equitable representation of various issues that should be debated fairly and justly, urging the council to be an international organisation in the true sense of the word, serving the whole world community and not merely the interests of those powers that achieved military victory in World War II, the paper continued. Domination by the major world powers over the destiny of the world organisation is bound to tempt them to impose hegemony over the whole world, the paper added. It said that these major powers have a serious responsibility for establishing world peace and security for all nations, helping to end all wars and conflicts. What is happening now in the wake of the collapse of the Communist empire, added the paper, is the exercise by the sole world superpower of its influence on the nations of the world, forcing them to serve its own selfish interests.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist for Al Ra'i daily, said that something good has resulted from Israel's decision to expel the 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon. The expulsion has led to a pan-Arab consensus on condemning the Israeli crime and working towards fulfilling the national aspirations of the Palestinian people, said the writer. Furthermore, this issue awakened the conscience of the world community which has now realised the danger inherent in the occupation of Arab land. This, he said, was best represented in Security Council Resolution 799 which demanded the repatriation of the expellees. He said that the expulsion of the Palestinians more than three months ago exposed further the true nature of the U.S.-Israeli alliance and prompted Washington to call for an early resumption of the Arab-Israeli negotiations in order to find a way out of this dilemma. The expulsion, the writer added, has unified the Palestinians and given them momentum to their infitadah in the face of Israel's occupation. He said the Israeli move to deport the Palestinians has embarrassed the American administration, which is now containing policies that are bound to harm U.S. interests. The writer said the only way to unify Arab and Palestinian ranks vis-a-vis the common danger.

The View From Fourth Circle

The language of guns and knives

THERE IS a peculiar clarity in the language of blood, an incongruous message of hope that is hard to miss. The knives and the guns of Palestine speak loudly these days, and they speak of an impending peace. The sharp escalation in violence and death in Palestine and Israel during the last week will probably prove to be a good omen for progress in the Arab-Israeli peace talks later this year. In fact, I would expect this year to be decisive for the search for peace in Palestine, due to the convergence of three crucial trends since mid-century: the violence of the indigenous struggle in Palestine, the historical movement towards political and territorial compromise among Arabs and Israelis, and several crucial international trends that should prod a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace.

The more audacious use of knives and guns by some Palestinians to confront the Israeli occupation is an historically significant qualitative shift in the nature of the Palestinian struggle for national rights. It is important because it comes at a time when Arabs and Israelis are (sort of) locked in a negotiation to resolve their disputes peacefully, and after five years of a relatively non-lethal, stone-throwing, street-based nationalistic uprising by the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation. The Palestinians' use of guns and knives now on an almost daily basis sends a dramatic message to Israel and to the rest of the world: We have reached the point of fearlessness, at which we risk almost certain death or life imprisonment, in challenging the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In all modern nationalist struggles, this point of fearlessness was the crucial turning point in the struggle for independence and dignity. When the subjugated or occupied party no longer fears injury, jail, or death, the military power and moral frenzy of the dominant or occupying party lose their comparative advantage. This happened in many situations in recent decades, from Vietnam, Iran, the Philippines and Afghanistan, to Romania, South Africa, and Selma, Alabama, to mention only the most obvious.

The Israeli response to the heightened struggle for liberation by the Palestinians is pathetic, but very telling. The Israelis speak of an increase in Palestinian terrorism and violence, and they respond by sending more troops to the occupied territories, imposing more stringent controls on the occupied Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and urging settlers and other Israelis to carry guns.

We see Israel and Zionism instinctively resort to the three primal elements of their modern history that have only brought them further insecurity and violence:

1. Racism against Palestinians (and other Arabs) whom the Israelis try to isolate as a convenient cheap labour pool that is somehow politically sanitized, nationally pacified, and militarily disarmed. This is an impossible task that was attempted and briefly achieved by many white South Africans, Rhodesians (Zimbabweans) and Americans against their own black populations, and by the British in Asia and the French in North Africa; but it collapsed ultimately because it was an unconscionable and mutually degrading racist phenomenon that could not be sustained in the face of the human spirit for freedom. It will not be

sustained in Palestine, either, regardless of the guns that Israel commands, because the intensity of the human will to live in freedom and dignity is far greater than the calibre inscribed on any bullet in the hands of an Israeli soldier.

2. Militarism. The instinctive Israeli/Zionist use of military force has become something of a joke, were it not for the fact that Arabs and Israelis alike are being killed almost daily. But militarism has brought Israel only further insecurity, as hundreds of ordinary Israelis now carry guns on their hips when they leave their homes. Is this the sort of security that Israel claims to derive from its emphasis on militarism? Increasing the occupation battalions and using more severe tactics against Palestinians will only further escalate the Palestinian will to fight and to fight with increasingly lethal weapons.

If the current trend continues, it is only a matter of time before

The Israeli response to the heightened struggle for liberation by the Palestinians is pathetic, but very telling. The Israelis speak of an increase in Palestinian terrorism and violence, and they respond by sending more troops to the occupied territories, imposing more stringent controls on the occupied Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and urging settlers and other Israelis to carry guns

some young men poison an Israeli water source or take their automatic weapons into a crowded Israeli street and shoot indiscriminately, aiming only to kill and injure as many Israelis/Zionists as possible. This shall have been the logical consequence of a culture of militarism that Israel has not only adopted and championed, but also glorified and even sanctified. It will bring only death, not security, as we witness on a daily basis this week.

3. Turning to foreign support in the form of guns, money, and political protection. Israel has always been seen by the Arabs as an alien colonial outpost implanted in the Middle East by foreign force and design, and thus it has always relied on extensive support from outside the region to continue to exist in its present form. Instead of trying to establish its credibility and acceptance in the region by addressing the Palestinians and other Arabs with whom it must live, Israel finds it easier to portray the Arabs as irrational and violent Jew-haters who are also a threat to Western interests, and who must be confronted and checked by a combination of Israeli and Western power. The latest incarnation of this philosophy sees Israelis and Westerners, especially some Americans, fomenting intense fear of the Arab brand of Islam and Islamic militancy as a new global threat. It has always been

easier for Israelis/Zionists to use their power and influence to seek the backing of western politicians than to seek an accommodation with their Palestinian and Arab cousins and neighbours.

The Israelis turn to these three options yet again this week in what must be seen as a sad and pitiful cycle of their seemingly masochistic penchant for perpetual confrontation and violence. This cycle, however, is reaching an historic turning point, and the increased violence in Palestine in recent weeks is probably a harbinger of significant political change, because it highlights the mutual utility and suffering that results from blind death.

Change is imminent because of two other important factors. The peace talks that started in Madrid in 1991 are a sign from both sides that the current battle cannot continue, and should be resolved through negotiations. And, the changing geo-political scene in the rest of the world has vastly reduced the strategic importance of the Middle East. It is in the interest of the world today to resolve the Palestine conflict as a first step towards addressing the underlying causes of anger and tension in the region.

The cost of conflict in this part of the world, in political and economic terms, has become greater than the risks of peace for most other countries (especially the industrialised North). Therefore the world will probably exert more pressure for a negotiated peace because, such a settlement is very possible today.

The violence this week and month will be an important element in pushing forward the peace process, because it will highlight the untenable nature of the current occupation — an occupation that in turn highlights the untenable nature of Israeli/Zionist colonialism. It is ironic, but perhaps appropriate, that Yitzhak Rabin should be prime minister of Israel today and the person who has to confront the large dilemma that faces his people; that greater stress on military security increases the insecurity, of a people that now has to walk around its own country carrying guns and looking over its shoulders for the knives of the Arab people they occupy and oppress.

Mr. Rabin was the man who used massive force in the 1970s and 1980s in an obviously futile attempt to quash the resistance that represented the Palestinian quest for national affirmation, and he confronts the same situation today. His resort to racism, militarism, and foreign support will not work. Only coming to terms with the reality of Palestinian national identity and the vitality of the Arab/Islamic culture of this region can provide Mr. Rabin, Israel and the world's Jewish people with the one element they have always craved but never secured in Palestine in modern history — a normal existence, as one of many national communities living together in a region that has always accommodated them all within a framework of cultural and religious pluralism.

If Mr. Rabin wants to go down in history as a great leader, he should put away his gun manual and take out his history books. If he does not believe us, he should listen to the language of the guns and the knives that he has spawned in Palestine.

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A war of faith

Despite their dwindling supplies, Kashmiri militants wage their battle against India with the belief that God is on their side

By Raja Asghar Reuter

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan — Commander Ahmad Hassan believes God will help Kashmiri militants to win their armed struggle, Jihad, against India even if their vital backer Pakistan bows to U.S. threats and stops giving them arms.

"We did not consult America or Pakistan when we started the Kashmir Liberation Movement. We depend on Allah and with his blessing we will win this war," Mr. Hassan said in an interview. But the Muslim militants, fighting for four years to secede from India, may have lost their most important source of support with a U.S. decision early this year to place Pakistan on a watch list of states allegedly sponsoring terrorism.

Both Mr. Hassan's fundamentalist Hezb-ul-Mujahideen and the moderate Jamaat and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) put on a bold face in dismissing the risk to their armed movement. However, caution, or fear of the U.S. threat, keeps the militants from any show of the arms or bravado they once displayed in Muzaaffarabad, capital of Azad (free) Kashmir, the Pakistan-ruled one-third of their disputed Himalayan region.

India rules the other two-thirds of Kashmir, over which the two countries have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947.

The U.S. State Department said in January the Clinton administration would review within four to six months reports that Pakistan was supporting Kashmiri and Sikh militants "who commit terrorist acts in India."

Kashmiris voice fears Pakistan's haste to persuade Washington it is not involved will deal a serious blow to the four-year-old uprising in India's only Muslim-majority state by militants seeking independence or union with Islamic Pakistan.

Pakistan denies Indian charges of training and arming the militants, saying it gives only moral and political support to what it calls Kashmiri "freedom fighters."

Militant leaders who just a year ago would proudly show their fighters to reporters now refuse to be photographed with their weapons and deny the U.S. charges of training camps for fighters tucked among Kashmir's rugged mountains.

"We don't want to be called terrorists," said an official of one militant group as he waved away a guard carrying a Kalashnikov assault rifle during an interview. Most leaders hotly deny that

they drill fighters in Azad Kashmir and insist the training takes place across the porous border in Indian Kashmir.

However, a few individual fighters acknowledge they were trained in Azad Kashmir by private instructors.

Islamabad says the U.S. action poses a serious threat to relations between the two longtime allies but has expressed confidence it will not join Libya, Iran, Syria, North Korea, Iraq and Cuba on the U.S. terrorism list.

Ties between Islamabad and Washington have soured since the United States cut off all military and new economic aid to Pakistan in 1990 on the suspicion it was making nuclear weapons.

But Kashmir has been an emotive issue in Pakistan since the territorial dispute erupted more than 45 years ago.

A government in Islamabad that tried to put a total stop to the flow of arms to the militants or restrict their activities in Azad Kashmir would be committing political suicide.

"I think the government is not in a position to restrict this movement," Raja Muzaaffar, vice-president of the pro-independence JKLF, said in an interview. "The people of Pakistan are very emotional about Kashmir."

Muzaaffar called the U.S. threat unjustified, saying Kashmiris were fighting for the "basic right of self-determination" that deserved the support rather than the opposition of the world's leading democracy.

"If the world wants them to lay down arms, then their basic demand for independence must be conceded."

The Kashmir uprising is a war

for Hezb Ul Mujahideen, which wants the state to join Pakistan. "Allah has stated in the Koran that Allah will open and facilitate the path for those who wage Jihad in his way," said Mr. Hassan, his bearded face masked with a cloth.

"So far as resources and other things are concerned, we have confidence in Allah. Allah makes our task easy. We are not left helpless, our problems are solved automatically."

Even if Pakistan stopped its political support to the militants, it would make little difference, he said.

"We started this movement depending on our own power. We have to take it to its conclusion with our blood," Mr. Hassan said.

"No one can suppress a nation that sees paradise in the barrel of the gun," said a colleague who declined to give his name.

JKLF spearheaded the revolt in Indian Kashmir in which more than 9,000 people have been killed, but later lost ground to the Hezb, regarded by Kashmiris as the main recipient of Pakistani help.

The JKLF aim to reunite Kashmir into an independent state rather than join Pakistan has angered Islamabad.

The Hezb fought several bloody battles with the JKLF in the Indian-ruled Kashmir valley before the two agreed last December to set aside their differences for the time being.

"We have compromised against a common enemy and now there is no fight between the two groups," Mr. Muzaaffar said. Their first aim was to drive out India and to leave a decision on Kashmir's future to its people.

LETTERS

Setting the record straight

To the Editor:

IN a news brief published in the Jordan Times on March 9, you attributed a letter sent to the Pope by the International Anti-Zionism Front (IAZF) to a local society against Zionism and racism. The letter sent to the Pope suggesting the creation of a Vatican Arab committees along the lines of the Vatican Israeli committee was written by the International Anti-Zionism Front, which was established in 1989.

The front, which is headed by Russian professor Alexander Romanenko and represented in Amman by Mr. Marwan Sudah, is not connected to the local Jordanian society against Zionism, which was formed in Amman earlier this month.

We regret that you overlooked the fact that our front had sent this important message and attributed it to another society instead.

Marwan Sudah, Amman.



Russia's power struggle

Security ministers will decide Yeltsin's fate

By Oliver Wates Reuter

MOSCOW — In the end, of course, it all comes down to which side the men with the guns support.

Will the army and security forces back President Boris Yeltsin's rule-by-decree declaration of Saturday night?

Or will they side with Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, the head of the constitutional court and the Russian parliament in rejecting the move as unconstitutional?

If they endorse Mr. Yeltsin's plans for a referendum on who rules Russia and a new constitution, then the Congress of People's Deputies, the supreme legislature, seems doomed. A new parliament would be elected.

If they back parliament, then Mr. Yeltsin, like Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev before him, is politically finished.

Mr. Yeltsin effectively declared presidential rule on Saturday night, telling the 150 million Russian citizens that anything contradicting his orders had no validity.

Parliament, faced with a death warrant, can be expected to issue its counter-orders, based on its position in the much-amended constitution. A clash between the two sets of orders will come, sooner rather than later.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, Security Minister Viktor Barannikov and Interior Minister Viktor Yerin were all appointed by Mr. Yeltsin.

Career officials in the army and police, they have been careful to avoid taking sides publicly. Mr. Yeltsin stressed in his decree that

he had ordered the military to stay out of politics.

Military leaders seem desperate to avoid the nightmare of a split of the armed forces, leading to civil war and even nuclear conflagration.

During the last confrontation between Mr. Yeltsin and congress in December, all three ministers appeared before the legislature to pledge their allegiance to the constitution.

On the face of it, this would mean supporting parliament and congress. But Mr. Yeltsin left the door open for a different interpretation, seeking to justify his action by the need to defend the basic principles of constitutionalism.

"The congress and Supreme Soviet (parliament) declare any decision they take constitutional, nothing can stop them, no one can hold them back from lawless despotism," he said in his television address.

The constitutional court had failed to stop this, he said. Mr. Yeltsin's decree, according to extracts published by RIA news agency, repeatedly stressed his concern to preserve constitutional order.

The president is appealing to the body politic to put loyalty to himself as Russia's first, ever democratically elected president above loyalty to a Communist-era constitution repeatedly amended by a congress dominated by ex-Communists.

Acting Parliament Head Yuri Voronin told reporters on Saturday that he had spoken to Mr. Grachev and Mr. Yerin and both had pledged to respect the constitution.

But a senior Yeltsin aide, who asked not to be named, told

Reuters: "We have no concerns (about the two ministers), they are ready and waiting to maintain order if necessary."

Constitutional Court Chairman Valery Zorkin sounded a note of alarm in a brief television statement in the early hours of Sunday, saying he had been unable to contact Mr. Barannikov.

"This is the first time in my experience that the security minister cannot be contacted via the special phone link. This makes me ask: Where was he? It makes you think," he said.

Even if the three "power" ministers support him, Mr. Yeltsin could have serious difficulties making his referendum plan stick in Russia's increasingly restive regions and ethnic republics.

Some republican leaders have already declared they will not hold any such vote on the grounds that it would infringe their rights of autonomy and many others have doubts about it.

Mr. Rutskoi said Saturday that the president's plan would lead to conflict and bloodshed, a view shared by many senior politicians.

Mr. Yeltsin sought to ease regional sensibilities by declaring that his decree did not affect the federation treaty, a 1992 agreement guaranteeing the autonomy rights of the republics.

He also sacked several regional officials, including administration chiefs in Irkutsk and Novosibirsk, for breach of existing legislation.

Whatever the outcome, Mr. Yeltsin's move seems likely to force a showdown in the long-running power struggle which has paralysed Russian politics, put off Western investors and hampered reform.

Yeltsin camp claims support

(Continued from page 1)

ask people whether he or legislators should rule Russia. Valery Zorkin, chairman of the constitutional court, immediately called Mr. Yeltsin's actions an attempted coup.

The 247-member Supreme Soviet standing legislature, in an emergency session Sunday night, voted 125-16 to ask the constitutional court to review the legality of Mr. Yeltsin's actions.

The United States and many other Western nations have endorsed Mr. Yeltsin's actions, believing Russia's democratic reforms are at stake.

Mr. Yeltsin's office said the president remained in Moscow on Monday. His 85-year-old mother died Sunday in Yekaterinburg, and she reportedly was to be buried in Moscow.

Mr. Kostikov lambasted Mr. Zorkin for criticising Mr. Yeltsin before convening the court to consider the case. The spokesman also praised the army for staying out of the dispute.

"The population welcomed with understanding the president's proposals toward resolving the crisis," Mr. Kostikov said.

"The proposals voiced in the president's appeal to the citizens of Russia are finding a growing support in the country," he said, without citing evidence.

Public reaction has been mixed, on Sunday, pro and anti-Yeltsin demonstrations each drew about 5,000 people.

Reform-minded political groups and administrators and some business people have endorsed the president's stand, while more hardline politicians and Russians oppose it.

About 200 anti-Yeltsin demonstrators protested in the rain outside the Russian parliament building on Monday, but Mos-

cow's streets otherwise were quiet.

Mr. Kostikov accused Mr. Yeltsin's political foes of trying to "heighten tensions by busy and legally baseless actions do not find a response among the population."

The Constitutional court did not rule Monday on the constitutionality of Mr. Yeltsin's decisions.

Mr. Zorkin held out the possibility that a compromise was possible between Mr. Yeltsin and legislators. He said he hoped "the president will revise his attitude to the constitutional court and the congress of people's deputies."

The constitutional court had begun an informal review before the Supreme Soviet vote because it considered Mr. Yeltsin's address "an attempt to cross out the basic principles of the constitution, primarily the principle of the division of powers," a court spokesman told the ITAR-TASS news agency earlier.

Mr. Kostikov dismissed the constitutional court's deliberations, noting "the hasty and unilateral stand" of Mr. Zorkin.

"Thus, the chairman of the constitutional court has a priori adopted the position of one of the sides, casting doubt on his own impartiality," Mr. Kostikov said.

Mr. Yeltsin said he would ask voters to approve a constitution to replace the Soviet-era charter, effectively disbanding the communist dominated congress and scheduling legislative elections.

Mr. Kostikov noted that the army was obeying Mr. Yeltsin's order to stay out of the political struggle.

In spite of efforts by certain circles in the Supreme Soviet to draw the military into the confrontation, the army is preserving its loyalty to the law," he said.

Mr. Kostikov praised Western

political leaders who have expressed support for Mr. Yeltsin, saying this demonstrated that the president's actions were "legally valid."

In Little Rock, Arkansas, U.S. President Bill Clinton said he has no plans to change the location of the summit with Mr. Yeltsin.

Mr. Clinton told reporters he had "no plans to change the site at this time."

Mr. Clinton, who was in Little Rock to visit his ailing father-in-law Hugh Rodham, was asked by

reporters whether he would consider changing the site of the April 3-4 summit.

Senate minority leader Robert Dole suggested Sunday that Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Clinton meet in Moscow instead of Vancouver, Canada, as scheduled.

Earlier Monday in Washington, Clinton spokesman Dee Dee Myers said the White House would consider moving the summit to Moscow if Mr. Yeltsin deemed it necessary — but had no current plans to do so.

Palestinians debate Gaza prospects

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinians now have little doubt that the Israelis "will withdraw fully from the strip."

Yossi Sarid, Israel's minister of environment, called last week for a quick Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

"Israel is not interested in governing Gaza and will hand Gaza over, as quickly as possible," said Mr. Sarid, a senior member of the Meretz bloc in the Israeli parliament.

Mr. Sarid added that such a withdrawal should come in the framework of a "peace agreement, and not unilaterally."

Palestinian politicians agree with the Israelis on the issue of withdrawal in the framework of an all-encompassing agreement.

"We believe that a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza would be counterproductive to our interests," said a spokesman for the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in Amman.

"We want a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip to come about as part of a full-fledged framework for Israeli departure from all the occupied territories," said Hamas spokesman Mohammad Nazzari.

A unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza would adversely affect energy and resources of the poverty-stricken strip and deflect attention from the West Bank and Jerusalem, said Mr. Nazzari, who is a spokesman for one of the few Palestinian groups which is not a member of the PLO.

"Some people might even think of announcing a state in Gaza because it would be the first liberated land of Palestine," Mr. Nazzari said.

"We don't want this to happen because then the Israelis and others would undoubtedly argue that Palestine exists in Gaza and make an international case to drop the issue of withdrawing from the West Bank and Jerusalem," Mr. Nazzari added.

Talk of withdrawal, PLO officials say, is "very premature." They argue that Israel will use a commitment to "totally withdraw" from Gaza to obtain other territorial concessions from the Palestinians.

PLO sources believe that in the final analysis there will be, or there have to be, a total Israeli withdrawal which includes dismantling the settlements in the Gaza Strip.

"They will try to use their withdrawal from Gaza, which they badly want to do anyway, as a propaganda tool," said the advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team.

In return for this withdrawal they will try to obtain territorial concessions from the Palestinians in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

A West Bank "territorial settlement" that would include areas in and around the cities of Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron is what the Israelis have in

mind, said a senior member of the PLO Executive Committee speaking on condition of anonymity from Tunis.

A recent article printed in an Israeli newspaper were accompanied by a map showing Israel's version of a "territorial settlement" with the Palestinians. The map includes the cities and environs of Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron only.

While no Palestinian official involved with the negotiations agreed to go on the record about the map, several admitted that the map was what the "Israelis have in mind for the Palestinians."

"Gaza will be vacated and be ruled by the Palestinians and the West Bank will be 'cantoned' according to the Israelis," said the PLO Executive Committee member.

But Palestinian officials say that such a plan is a "maximalist" position of the Israelis which "will have to change" if there is to be peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

"Such a plan is not acceptable to us. U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 certainly do not call for such a solution," said the advisor to the negotiating team.

While the PLO is worried about what the West Bank will look like once the negotiations are finalised, Hamas is concentrating more on the Gaza aspect of the negotiations.

Worried that the PLO "will send in a PLO-controlled Palestinian police force" to run the violence-ridden strip, Hamas repeated its call for the entry of "U.N. peace-keeping forces" into the strip to oversee elections.

"We prefer if the Gaza Strip was handed over to the U.N. instead of a Palestinian police force, because then we would be assured of free elections," said a spokesman of Hamas on condition of anonymity.

The rift between Hamas and the PLO appeared to grow as a PLO-Hamas dialogue came to a standstill last week.

The PLO is not interested in "flattering Hamas" at this stage. "We are not going to court Hamas right now. We have to worry about the Israelis and their plans for our lands," said the PLO Executive Committee member.

The advisor to the negotiating team confirmed that the Palestinians were in a "catch-22" situation.

"We can't withdraw from the talks because if they withdraw from Gaza unilaterally allowing chaos to rule and began an overnight building boom of settlements in the West Bank, we will have nothing left to negotiate by the time we get them to a negotiating stage again," said the advisor.

"On the other hand if we stay in the negotiating game we may not be offered more than some cantons and such a solution will be opposed by our people and it will be contrary to international law."

FBI said searching for new figure in blast

NEW YORK (AP) — The list of suspects in the World Trade Centre bombing had expanded to include an engineer who has lived in Brooklyn and Iraq, according to a newspaper report.

New York Newsday said the U.S. Justice Department is looking for Musad Yasin in connection with the Feb. 26 bombing.

"He hasn't been charged with anything so I'm not going to comment," Joe Valiquette, spokesman for the New York Federal Bureau of Investigation office, told the newspaper's Sunday edition.

City records show that a man named Musad Yasin had a taxi driver's licence from 1984-1990. He was born in Indianapolis and lived in Iraq for four years, Newsday reported.

A 1992 New Jersey telephone listing shows a "M. Yasin" residing in the same building as Mohammad Salameh, a man indicted in the bombing that killed six and injured more than 1,000,

Newsday said.

Abdul Kader Kallash, who is active in the city's Muslim community, told the newspaper that he had not seen Mr. Yasin in some time and that he believed authorities were looking for him.

Salameh and Mahmud Abouhalima, another former taxi driver wanted for questioning by federal officials, were seen together at a New York area gasoline station the night before the blast, investigators told Newsday.

Mr. Abouhalima has vanished. Mr. Salameh is being held without bail.

The FBI is searching for Mr. Abouhalima, a 33-year-old Egyptian immigrant, whom authorities have described as a ringleader of the bombing.

Mr. Abouhalima reportedly fled New York on March 6 — eight days after the deadly blast beneath one of the two World Trade Centre 117-storey towers and two days after the arrest of Mr. Salameh.

Israeli soldiers kill 3 in Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

the bones of Arab demonstrators at the outbreak of the intifada.

Three Palestinians were reported shot dead by troops Monday in the Gaza Strip. Arab reports said one victim was a mentally retarded 11-year-old who was playing with a toy gun.

In the town of Khan Yunis in the strip, soldiers shot dead a muezzin, a Muslim who calls worshippers to prayer at the mosque, Palestinian sources said.

They said an Israeli army sniper aimed a rifle with a telescopic sight at Jihad Mustafa Ali Sadek, 22, and shot him in the back while he was standing at the top of his mosque's minaret.

In the Nusseirat refugee camp soldiers shot Yasser Al Majdalawi, 23, in the chest after dusk as Muslims broke the daytime fast for the Holy Month of Ramadan, Palestinians said. He died of his wounds in Shifa hospital, they said.

Mr. Rabin replying in parliament to right-wing motions of no-confidence a few hours after a Palestinian walked into a high school in Jerusalem and slashed five pupils and their principal.

"None was seriously wounded, but it was the 10th knife assault this month," said an Israeli official, adding that the incident was a "public realisation and right-wing demands that the Rabin government admit failure and resign."

Mr. Rabin's coalition was expected to defeat the no-confidence motions in a vote later Monday.

To derisive opposition heckling, Mr. Rabin said he was confident the Palestinians would attend the next round of peace talks April 20.

"I believe that we will get through this difficult period and that in 1993 we will see significant change, both from the political and security standpoints," he said.

Unlike previous prime ministers, who have portrayed Palestinian militants as a hardcore unsupported by the broad populace, Mr. Rabin's appraisal was blunt and sober. "Let's present the picture as it is, even if it hurts," he said.

"Let's speak the truth, it is a conflict between two different entities — religious, political, you could say national... most of the Palestinian public identifies with them (the attackers) and their goals."

He said his government was

deploying up to 2,000 extra policemen, but "we cannot put a policeman in every place where a stabber shows up."

The 71-year-old ex-general indicated concern that Israelis were losing their will to resist, noting that the civil guard had fallen from 150,000 volunteers in the 1970s to under 50,000 today.

Had the guard at the school gate been armed, as the law required, "the knife would have gotten what he deserved," Mr. Rabin said.

Right-wing politicians called during the parliamentary debate for a freer hand to deal with violence.

"Give the tools to the army and to civilians and give the people hope," demanded Benjamin Netanyahu, a front-runner for leadership of the opposition Likud Party in a faction election set for Wednesday.

The assailant, 22-year-old Nasser Hamdan Sheikrat from the Arab suburb of Jabal Mukaber, walked into the J.F. Kennedy High School in the nearby Jewish suburb of Talpuz just as pupils gathered for classes.

Witnesses said he shouted "allahu Akbar" and began slashing with a knife.

The school guard overpowered him, armed with a chair and aided by the principal, police "rescued" Sheikrat from a first flailing mob and took him to the hospital with a minor head injury.

Police said Sheikrat had a prison record for throwing fire bombs and torching a car.

After the Jerusalem incident, angry pupils and neighbours shouted "Death to the Arabs" and stoned Arab cars, Israel radio reported.

Mr. Rabin told reporters in Gaza a unilateral Gaza withdrawal, advocated by at least three ministers in his 18-member cabinet, was "out of the question today." A pullout would have to wait for a negotiated accord with the Palestinians.

Zimmerman, who also saw action in Lebanon after then-Defence Minister Ariel Sharon's 1982 ill-fated invasion, said: "Sharon kept us in Lebanon waiting for a peace treaty, but Israel kept dying, and in a few years we couldn't take it anymore — we just left, without a treaty, without anything."

"It's just like Lebanon now," the corporal said, shielding his eyes from the brilliant Gaza sun.

Lawyers of Egyptian cleric to boycott his trial

CAIRO (R) — Lawyers for Muslim preacher Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman decided Monday to boycott a new trial set by the Egyptian government, saying it was part of a campaign to finish off Islamic militants.

"We have decided to boycott in view of the climate and the situation surrounding us... which are unjust. In any case, they (government) will issue the verdict they want whether we attend or not," lawyer Adel Aymouni told Reuters.

The government accuses Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who fled to the United States in 1991, of leading a militant group that has attacked police, Christians and tourists in a war to establish a purist Islamic caliphate in Egypt.

Three men arrested in the United States after last month's bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York have also been allegedly linked with Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

Mr. Aymouni said Sunday not-guilty verdicts passed on the blind preacher and 49 alleged militants in 1990 after anti-government violence in the oasis of Fayoum had been cancelled and the case would be retried in Sheikh Abdul Rahman's absence next month.

The lawyer said Monday the boycott was "an expression of anger" at the government's decision and he and four other lawyers of Sheikh Rahman had agreed not to attend.

"This decision is part of an

organised campaign against Doctor Omar at a time all the Islamists in the country are being hit. This is a war against us... on what basis they want to try Sheikh Omar in the same judicial court which issued a verdict proclaiming him innocent three years ago?" Mr. Aymouni asked.

"This a plot to incriminate Sheikh Omar. The ruling regime wants to destroy Sheikh Omar and his (Islamic) call. This is the main objective behind putting him back to trial," he added.

Mr. Aymouni said Sheikh Abdul Rahman had been informed two months ago that the government cancelled the 1990 verdict and decided to re-try him again. But the blind preacher told them he would not attend "because in Egypt they have no respect for the law."

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who was tried but acquitted of blessing the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, fled Egypt after the Fayoum case in 1990 and settled in New York.

If the re-trial finds him guilty, judicial sources said the government could seek his extradition. A U.S. court has already ruled that he should not have been granted a residence permit.

The Egyptian government mounted an all-out war on militants this month, killing 28 suspects in raids and putting 49 on trial in a military court for attacks on foreigners that have ravaged the tourist industry.

Palestinians upbeat after U.S. letter

(Continued from page 1)

ed upbeat. "We expect things to move within the coming few days," he told the Jordan Times without elaboration.

Mr. Hussein said the Palestinian side had responded to Friday's American message affirming the delegation's visit to Washington and covering "some of the points tackled in the letter from the U.S."

The exchange of message was done through the American ambassador in Tunis.

The Palestinian reply, Mr. Hussein said, "includes the requirements which we view as most necessary for the success of the peace process."

Mr. Hussein said the American letter "indicated that some positive measures would be taken soon."

Tunis-based PLO officials said the American letter urged Palestinians to seize "the historic chance of achieving peace" and offered reassurances that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who held talks with President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington last week, was "serious in his approach towards the peace process."

The American letter also expressed Washington's concern to ensure that progress is made on all tracks of negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, and assured the Palestinians that separate peace treaties between other Arab parties and Israel outside the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement were not likely.

A similar American letter was also delivered to other Arab states such as Morocco and Egypt, which were exerting efforts to bring the Americans and Israel to approve a six-point compromise deal formulated and agreed in principle between Palestinians and Mr. Christopher during his visit to the Middle East last month.

The deal, aimed at defusing the expellee crisis which has stalled the peace process, included Palestinian demands for Israeli commitments not to resort to expulsion in the future and to the principle of land in exchange for peace as enshrined in U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Mr. Hussein and other Palestinian delegates accompanying him to Washington "will seek to follow up on the demand concerning 242 and 338, and thus improve the terms of reference for the peace talks," said a Tunis-based PLO official.

The official said the Palestinians were informed through third parties that Israel would refrain from expelling Palestinians, but that its commitment would remain unannounced. He also said that Israel would accept speeding up the return of the 400 expellees and might increase the number of the first batch of expellees allowed to return from the 101 it has proposed.

According to Mr. Abed Rabbo, "the Palestinian delegation will discuss the expellee crisis with American officials and seek unequivocal assurances that Resolution 242 applies to all occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem."

While Mr. Abed Rabbo declined to elaborate further, the Tunis-based PLO officials said the Palestinians were not insisting that Israel undertake such a commitment to 242 in public.

"They (Israelis) could provide a American-arranged guarantee to this effect and we would accept it," the official said.

Parallel to the Washington talks, representatives of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians will meet in Damascus to come up with a collective response to the American-Russian letters of invitations to the April 20 talks.

Push against alcohol gains ground

(Continued from page 1)

observer.

Youssef Al-Athem, a prominent Muslim Brotherhood deputy in the House, declined to comment on the movement's optics. All he would say was: "We hope that the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker is committed to its obligations."

Pressed on how his bloc viewed the government move to defer the law until the 11th hour, Mr. Athem said: "I prefer not to answer that question."

Notwithstanding the anti-alcohol arguments, any ban on production and consumption of alcoholic beverages would seriously affect the national economy, according to a study made last year.

The study, prepared by distilleries and breweries in Jordan in a campaign to block the Brotherhood-led move in Parliament, estimated that over JD 25 million were invested in the industry, which employs over 700 people who earn JD 1 million a year, and paid JD 6 million in excise fees and related charges to the treasury in 1991 in addition to earning JD 6 million in foreign currency through exports.

Beyond the economic considerations, the ban was also fought on the House floor by deputies Tarawneh and Nabulsi on grounds that it was a violation of "the freedom of choice of individuals guaranteed by the Constitution."

Although many other Muslim and Christian deputies agreed with this viewpoint re-

gardless of their personal approach to alcohol consumption or abstention, they balked and still balk at going public with their stand.

"I will be committing political suicide if I adopt a stand against banning alcohol," said a lawmaker well-known for his controversial comments on the House floor. "Most of my constituents are lower-middle class religious people and they would spit at me if I said I oppose prohibition of alcohol in the country," he added, speaking on condition of anonymity.

According to a version of the draft law published in the local press, the legislation would ban production of alcohol in the country in any form and revoke the licenses given to all distilleries and breweries, and all permits given to bars.

The report, which an official familiar with the draft law described as largely accurate, said the legislation would prohibit all importation of liquor except for hotels and "tourism" facilities where alcohol serving would be restricted to foreign tourists.

Distilleries, breweries and liquor stores as well as present importers would be allowed a period of six months to liquidate themselves. They can export their stocks during this period.

The draft law also bans serving of alcohol at private parties and lays down a set of punishment for violators ranging between one and three years in prison and JD 5,000 and JD 10,000 in fines in addition to confiscation of seized stocks if any.

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Sarajevo comes under heaviest Serb bombardment of year

SARAJEVO (AP) — The U.N. commander in Sarajevo accused Serb forces Monday of targeting non-strategic civilian areas in the heaviest bombardment of the year on the besieged capital.

U.N. officials, meanwhile, worked to clear the way for more relief for Srebrenica, which was the target of overnight shelling.

Col. Marcel Valentin of France said U.N. military observers counted nearly 2,400 shells in a barrage Sunday, including 414 in Sarajevo's old city, a mainly residential area without major military positions.

Col. Valentin said he tried without success to reach a senior Serb commander to request a halt to the barrage, which, according to unofficial counts, killed at least seven people and wounded scores.

The French commander wondered aloud how the Serb guns could "coordinate their fire without a senior officer being present at the headquarters."

In the east, U.N. officials took up a Serb request for evacuation of 272 Serbs from the government-held town of Tuzla in the northeast.

Serbs have made such an evacuation a condition for allowing helicopters into Srebrenica to evacuate sick and wounded.

The list includes some Serbs who want to leave, but have property and would be willing to stay in Tuzla if their safety was assured, said Peter Kessler, spokesman in Sarajevo for the

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Gen. Philippe Morillon, commander of all U.N. forces in Bosnia, negotiated the evacuations Sunday. He rejected suggestions that the move could be seen as the start of more "ethnic cleansing" to create more ethnically homogeneous regions in eastern Bosnia.

Gen. Morillon has been holed up in Srebrenica Post Office for more than a week, essentially standing between attacking Serbs and tens of thousands of desperate refugees and residents stranded in the town.

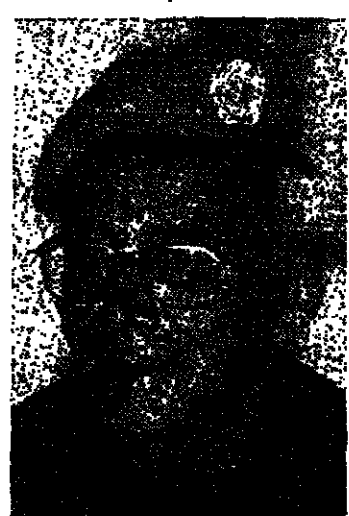
Serb forces again shelled the Srebrenica region overnight, with some attacks apparently coming from weapons in Serbia itself, across the nearby Drina River border with Bosnia, Sarajevo Radio reported.

Four people were killed and seven wounded, the radio said. The report could not be independently confirmed.

In Sarajevo, heavy fighting and shelling also continued early Monday around the airport. The international airport, halted Friday, remained suspended.

Serb forces were gaining territory in a gradual offensive on Stup, a western suburb near the airport. Further Serb gains could place the U.N. command post, located in a former Sarajevo communications building, directly on the front line.

Asked whether he thought Serbs were trying to maximise



Gen. Philippe Morillon

their holdings before the possible signing of a peace plan, Col. Valentin replied: "It's obvious."

He said Sunday's bombardment was "the heaviest shelling since the beginning of the year."

He said the Serbs seemed to have timed the barrage to take advantage of a diversion of media attention to the plight of Srebrenica.

"This is the first time we saw so many shells on the same place," he said, referring to the targeting of civilian areas Sunday.

Gen. Morillon has moved from Sarajevo to Srebrenica, making daily sorties to negotiate with the Bosnian Serbs on his demands for

a ceasefire in the area, deployment of U.N. military observers, free passage for aid convoys and evacuation of the sick and wounded.

Overnight, U.S. planes dropped more than 43 tonnes of food and other supplies in the Srebrenica area.

France said Sunday it would join the U.S. airlift to eastern Bosnia. Joint flights are likely to depart from Frankfurt, where aid supplies are stockpiled, by the end of the week.

Mr. Kessler said the UNHCR had set up a soup kitchen in Srebrenica, providing 2,100 meals a day.

On Friday, U.N. trucks brought the first overland shipment of aid to Srebrenica in more than three months. The same trucks evacuated almost 700 Muslim refugees to Tuzla Saturday.

U.N. officials are trying to bring another food convoy and a French field hospital past Serb lines into Srebrenica.

A ham radio operator monitored in Sarajevo said 3,000 shells fell around Srebrenica Sunday, including several in the town centre.

At the United Nations in New York, the Security Council is moving toward enforcing a no-fly-zone over Bosnia.

Last week, the council condemned the Serb side for bombing villages near Srebrenica, the first time the United Nations had confirmed frequent allegations of Serb bombing.



A Bosnian soldier wounded in the intense bombardment of Sarajevo's western suburb, Stup, is carried into the emergency room. The Serbs are trying to cut all exit routes from the Bosnian capital, and shelling has been at its fiercest for several days (AFP photo)

N.Korean nuclear obligations are non-negotiable — Seoul

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korea, which this month pulled out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), cannot use its nuclear obligations as a bargaining counter to gain concessions, South Korea's foreign minister said Monday.

"Even if negotiations are held to peacefully solve this issue, Pyongyang's compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) nuclear inspections cannot be bargained for something else," Foreign Minister Han Sang-joo told reporters on the eve of a trip to the United States.

Mr. Han's first stop will be the United Nations, where he will discuss counter-measures against North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT this month.

"We must not rule out the possibility that the North is trying to complete its build-up of nuclear weapons," Mr. Han said. "We have to consider this possibility seriously."

He will also visit Japan, a country gravely concerned about North Korea's nuclear ambitions, before returning home March 31, the IAEA's deadline for compliance.

Reclusive North Korea fuelled global tensions when it pulled out of the treaty to limit the spread of nuclear weapons rather than allow the IAEA to inspect two

sites.

The move prompted South Korea to set the earliest possible date for the new foreign minister's visit to the United States.

Mr. Han is a member of the cabinet appointed on Feb. 26, the day after President Kim Young-Sam took office.

Pyeongyang described the sites as non-nuclear military installations and accused the IAEA of seeking to spy on North Korea at Washington's behest.

The Vienna-based IAEA has given Pyongyang a March 31 deadline to open the two sites to inspection.

"The North will be struck hard and may wither to death if the U.N. Security Council imposes economic sanctions with China's cooperation," Gong Ro-myung, Seoul's chief negotiator in talks with the North on the nuclear issue, said Sunday.

China is Pyongyang's only major ally and Seoul hopes it will mediate to defuse tensions on the Korean peninsula.

"China is well aware of our position and so it's not wise to pressure the Chinese too much," the foreign minister said.

Much of the tension generated by Pyongyang's declaration is subsiding following the end of the South Korea-United States annual Team Spirit military exercises last Thursday.

North Korea went on a "semi-war" footing in response to the exercise, which it said was a rehearsal for an invasion.

Mr. Gong said the two cold war foes may renew bilateral talks on the nuclear dispute next month.

Some 1.5 million people have volunteered to join North Korea's army and wage a "sacred war" to reunite the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang's official media reported Monday.

The surge of volunteers was "a hearty response" to the North's declaration of the "semi-war" state, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The KCNA report, monitored in Tokyo, said many of the volunteers wrote in blood, "I shall fight with life for Generalissimo Kim Il Sung and the Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il. Sacred war for reunification, 1993."

Kim Il Sung has ruled Communist North Korea since the Koreans were divided in 1945. Kim Jong Il, his son and expected heir, heads the North's 1.1 million troop army.

The KCNA report said the 1.5 million volunteers signed up for service in the "10 or more days" since the semi-war order was issued on March 9, when Team Spirit began. The manoeuvres, involving 120,000 troops, ended last Thursday.

Italian premier to replace agriculture minister

ROME (R) — Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato said Monday he would replace Gianni Fontana, who resigned as agriculture minister over the weekend after becoming caught up in the country's political corruption

scandal.

"I am working on proposing a new agriculture minister," Mr. Amato told reporters, ruling out suggestions he might temporarily take over the portfolio himself.

The Christian Democrat Fon-

tana was the fifth minister to resign because of the scandal in less than two months.

Magistrates in his northern home town of Verona had warned him he was being investigated for possible breaches of the

law on party financing and illegally receiving funds.

Although his departure had sent jitters through financial markets in Milan, analysts had never believed it was likely to bring down Mr. Amato's scandal-tainted government.

Hitler may have suffered from disease of arteries

CHICAGO (R) — Adolf Hitler was an uncooperative patient who self-medicated and refused to let his doctors examine his genitals, possibly because he was embarrassed over having only one testicle, a researcher said Sunday.

Hitler probably also suffered from a disease that reduces blood flow to the brain, according to University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine researcher Fritz Redlich.

In an article based on the diary and correspondence of Dr. Theodor Morrell, Hitler's personal physician between 1941 and 1945, Mr. Redlich said Hitler resisted his doctor's care, perhaps because he may have had only one testicle.

"Hitler was a difficult and uncooperative patient who self-medicated and refused clinical examinations of his lower abdomen," Dr. Redlich wrote in the medical journal Archives of Internal Medicine.

A French study of Soviet post mortem reports raised doubts about whether the charred body that was worked on was really Hitler's, in part because the Soviets reported it had only one testicle and there was no record of such an abnormality.

Dr. Redlich said Hitler's symptoms indicated he suffered from an arterial disease that causes inflammation and can reduce blood flow from the arteries to the brain.

Giant cell arteritis or temporal arteritis can now be treated with cortisone therapy. It occurs in patients of advanced age, and Hitler at the age of 50 would fall into the low range of susceptible candidates.

"(The diagnosis) remains tentative without biopsy or autopsy findings," Dr. Redlich wrote. "Morrell probably never heard of it, and cortisone therapy did not exist during Hitler's lifetime."

Two weeks before Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker in the closing days of World War II, Morrell made the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease and recommended treatment with L-dopa, an extract of Bulgarian herbs.

Hitler's Parkinsonism was readily apparent in newsreels that escaped Nazi censors, Dr. Redlich wrote.

But Dr. Redlich expressed his own opinion that Hitler's medical problems cannot be blamed for his actions.

"Neither Parkinson's disease nor the diagnosis of giant cell arteritis-temporal arteritis explains any of Hitler's crimes and mistakes," he wrote.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Tanker on fire off Dutch coast

AMSTERDAM (R) — A Danish tanker caught fire off the northern Dutch coast Monday, but the coastguard said the vessel was not carrying a cargo and the fire seemed to be under control. One of the 10-man crew was slightly injured, the coastguard said. "There was no cargo on board and there is no cargo spilling into the sea... the fire seems to be under control," Dutch Coastguard spokesman Cees Van Dijk said. The Danish built Maj Britt Terkol, a three-month-old chemicals carrier with a capacity of about 4,500 tonnes, was on its way from Rotterdam to Hamburg. It was 14 miles north of the island of Vlieland when the fire was reported. Rescue ships and fire-fighting vessels were nearby but there were no immediate plans to evacuate the crew and the ship's captain had told the coastguard that the tanker was still manoeuvrable. Mr. Van Dijk said.

Yeltsin's mother is dead at 85

MOSCOW (AP) — In the midst of President Boris Yeltsin's struggle with the Russian parliament, he has been hit by personal loss. His mother, Klavdia Yeltsin, died over the weekend in the Siberian city of Yekaterinburg. She was 85. Rumours of her death first surfaced Sunday at the session of the Supreme Soviet legislature. Government officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, later confirmed the whispered reports. Commonwealth Television also reported that Mrs. Yeltsin had died, without citing the cause or date of death.

Siege gunmen leave Costa Rica

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — The five gunmen who occupied the Nicaraguan embassy here for nearly two weeks left Costa Rica Sunday. Four went to Nicaragua and their leader to the Dominican Republic. The gunmen had demanded \$6 million and changes in the government of President Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua. No government shakeup was announced, but Nicaragua's interior minister said Managua paid the men \$250,000 to end the siege. Four masked men left for Nicaragua in a helicopter belonging to the Costa Rican government. Jose Orsina Lara, the leader of the group that stormed the embassy on March 8, left later Sunday for the Dominican Republic, where he was granted asylum.

Mortars fired on Philippine airport

DAVAO, Philippines (R) — Unidentified attackers fired improvised mortars Monday at Davao Airport in the southern Philippines, narrowly missing the runway. Police said no one was hurt. Bombs from three battery-operated mortars apparently sited just beyond the perimeter fence landed near the runway five minutes after a Philippine Airlines domestic flight had touched down, investigator Anastacio Naive said. Police General Geromino Valderrama said investigators were looking into the possible involvement of Communist guerrillas in the attack. He said police had not established what the actual target of the attack was but a suspect was being questioned. The blasts, which gouged out a crater but otherwise caused no damage, caused a temporary closure of the airport of Mindanao Island.

IRA plans inquiry into U.K. blast

DUBLIN (R) — The IRA plans to stage an internal inquiry into the weekend bombing in Britain that killed a three-year-old boy and sparked public outrage, Republican sources said Monday. "There is no way they would have wanted to kill a child. That sort of publicity does no good at all abroad," one Republican source said. "While the IRA sticks by its official line that adequate warning was given, it is likely that an internal inquiry will be held to see what went wrong," the source added. The Irish Republican Army, battling to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, said it planted two bombs which killed the child and wounded 56 people in the northern England town of Warrington Saturday.

Extremists attack German newspaper

MUNICH, Germany (R) — Suspected right-wingers firebombed a Bavarian newspaper Monday in the first attack on a newspaper office in a wave of anti-foreigner violence since German unification in 1990. A stone and a petrol bomb were thrown through a window in the office of the Mittelbayerische Zeitung in the town of Weorh north of Munich, a police spokesman said. The culprits daubed a large Swastika on a window and smaller Nazi symbols on two stickers saying "hostility to foreigners — we say no," he said. The pre-dawn attack caused some damage but no injuries.

Rivals launch strong attack on India's Rao

NEW DELHI (R) — Rivals of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao launched a strong attack on his leadership over the weekend, bringing a behind-the-scenes tussle within the ruling Congress Party into the open.

Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh, a key contender for the prime ministership, issued a statement Sunday accusing the party leadership of ignoring the rise of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Mr. Singh did not name Mr. Rao, who is also the Congress president, but there was no doubt he was the target.

"Any office in a democratic set-up, whether of a party or a country, cannot only be adorned. There has to be clear proof that the office is being used as an effective instrument to protect and project the basic interests of the country or the party, as the case may be," Mr. Singh said.

In the Congress such a statement is tantamount to open rebellion. Dissidence in the 108-year-old party, which has ruled India for all but four years since independence in 1947, is rarely expressed publicly, and leadership battles are usually confined to closed-door meetings.

Armoured divisions faced each other in the Thar Desert, which straddles the border between India and Pakistan, following an anti-Indian rebellion in the part of Kashmir ruled by New Delhi.

India accused Pakistan of arming, training and aiding Muslim rebels in the Himalayan territory, which is claimed by both countries. It has been the cause of two of the three wars they have fought since independence from Britain in 1947.

By June top diplomats of the two countries had held peace talks and initiated a series of confidence-building measures, Mr. Jha said.

"First evidence that Pakistan might be able to deploy nuclear weapons came in July when American satellites spotted heavy movement out of Kahuta (Pakistan's only nuclear facility)," Mr. Jha said.

He said the satellites also picked up bomb racks being altered on Pakistan's F-16 fleet to carry nuclear bombs.

PEKING (AP) — China's top judge said Monday that crime has risen sharply in the past five years and that some parts of the country are virtually lawless.

Supreme People's Court President Ren Jianxin said in a report to the National People's Congress that the number of criminal cases handled by China's courts had climbed an average 7.9 per cent annually since 1980.

"The general security situation is stable now, but in some places the security situation is still not good, with cases of serious crime continuing to rise. In a very few places, criminal activity is running wild," he said.

China's rapid economic development of recent years has spawned a wave of violent white collar crime. This in turn has prompted a series of police

Former Indian official denies threat of nuclear war

That Pakistan was (capable of) entering into a nuclear war before that was most unlikely," he said. "Our bombs, if we had any in the basement, remained in the basement."

India exploded an atomic device in 1974 but says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and that it does not possess weapons capability.

In October 1990 the Indian government was informed Pakistan had between seven and nine nuclear bombs, Mr. Jha said.

By then, Mr. Singh's government was in the midst of a domestic political crisis and was set to resign, Mr. Jha said. "We left that information to the next government," he added.

Mr. Singh was replaced by Chandra Shekhar in November that year and it is not known what action India took, if any.

In his New York article, Mr. Jha wrote that Robert Gates, a former director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who was then deputy national

5 S. African whites killed in 3 days

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Black gunmen killed a 55-year-old white man Monday, the third attack on whites in South Africa in three days in which five people have died.

Three policemen were also killed in the Johannesburg area over the weekend and the 18-year-old son of an African National Congress (ANC) official was shot dead in the West Rand, pushing up the national death toll.

Police spokesman major Piet Van Deventer said Tony Concer was the passenger in a car driven by Daniel De Bruin, 52, on their way to work when three or four black gunmen opened fire from the roadside at Vanderbijlpark, about 60 kilometres south of Johannesburg.

Mr. De Bruin was not hurt and managed to drive his bullet-holed car to a hospital and a police station.

The shooting followed an attack by black gunmen on a car on a school run in the Walkerville area just south of Johannesburg Friday in which a mother and her 14-year-old son were killed. Another passenger in the car, a 13-year-old girl, died in hospital from head wounds Sunday night.

In the Eastern Cape, white technical college student Frederick Johannes Jerling, 19, was killed by a black gunman who sprayed a motel he near Fort Beaufort with rifle fire Saturday night, police said.

A telephone caller claiming to speak for the Azanian People's

Liberation Army (APLA), guerrilla wing of the radical Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) said APLA had killed the woman and children. There were no immediate claims for the other attacks.

PAC information chief Barney Desai said Sunday a race war against whites was counter-productive and not part of PAC policy.

Mr. Desai, saying he was also speaking for APLA, said the PAC was outraged by calls to the media claiming APLA responsibility for the attack.

The South African Press Association (SAPA) said APLA, contacted at its headquarters in Tanzania, would neither confirm nor deny its members carried out Friday's killings.

crackdowns, making it hard to determine how much of the rise in the crime statistics is due to tighter policing.

Mr. Ren said that fewer than 1 in 200 of more than 2.4 million criminal suspects brought before courts over the past five years was found innocent, a statistic sure to fan charges that China ignores due process of law.

Crime soars in past 5 years in China

PEKING (AP) — China's top judge said Monday that crime has risen sharply in the past five years and that some parts of the country are virtually lawless.

Supreme People's Court President Ren Jianxin said in a report to the National People's Congress that the number of criminal cases handled by China's courts had climbed an average 7.9 per cent annually since 1980.

"The general security situation is stable now, but in some places the security situation is still not good, with cases of serious crime continuing to rise. In a very few places, criminal activity is running wild," he said.

China's rapid economic development of recent years has spawned a wave of violent white collar crime. This in turn has prompted a series of police

crackdowns, making it hard to determine how much of the rise in the crime statistics is due to tighter policing.

Mr. Ren said that fewer than 1 in 200 of more than 2.4 million criminal suspects brought before courts over the past five years was found innocent, a statistic sure to fan charges that China ignores due process of law.

security adviser, proved instrumental in averting the crisis between India and Pakistan.

Mr. Jha said Mr. Gates' visit to both countries in April 1990 was effective.

"He went to Pakistan first. He spoke quite strongly to the Pakistanis. When he came here he was given the evidence we had of Pakistan training Muslim rebels in Kashmir," Mr. Jha said.

"Later, the (Indian and Pakistan) troops were pulled back (in the Thar Desert) and the threat passed. U.S. pressure did play a part."

A spokesman for India's External Affairs Ministry said the government had no immediate comment on the New York article.

One of Mr. Jha's sources was Richard Kerr, who was deputy director of the CIA until he retired last year.

He told Mr. Jha: "It was the most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced since I've been in the U.S. government. It may be as close as we've come to a nuclear exchange."

COLUMN

Emma Thompson wins Britain's top film award

LONDON (R) — British actress Emma Thompson Sunday won Britain's version of the Oscar, taking the Best Actress Award for her role in Howard's End, which was also named Best Film. The British Academy of Film and Television Awards (BAFTA) are seen as an early pointer to the Oscars, to be announced in Hollywood on March 29. Howard's End, based on a 1908 novel by British writer E.M. Forster, has nine Oscar nominations, including one for Thompson as Best Actress. "I probably don't quite realise how nervous I will be at the Oscars," an excited Thompson said. "I'm probably going to have some sort of a frothing fit before it and be flown home to England in a wooden crate."

Thompson's husband Kenneth Branagh won an award for his contribution to cinema at the ceremony at London's Grosvenor House Hotel. Actor Robert Downey Jr won the Best Actor Award for his role in Sir Richard Attenborough's film Chaplin, based on the life of silent film star Charlie Chaplin. Downey has also been nominated for an Oscar. The Alexander Korda Award for Best British Film went to The Crying Game, about a British soldier captured by the Irish Republican Army and his relationship with one of his captors. In the Television Awards, John Thaw won Best Actor for Inspector Morse, a series about an intellectual but grumpy police detective, which also netted the Best Drama Series.

Japan anti-smokers want tennis meet cancelled

TOKYO (R) — Anti-smoking activists in Japan have asked a U.S.-based tobacco company to cancel an international tennis tournament, the Salem Open, scheduled to start in western Japan next Monday. A spokeswoman for R.J. Reynolds/M.C. Tobacco acknowledged Monday receiving a letter from an anti-smoking lobby opposing its sponsorship of the tournament and claiming that sports and tobacco are incompatible. Reynolds, a subsidiary of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco International of the United States, is sponsoring the Salem Open meet to be held in Osaka from March 29 to April 4. World number one Jim Courier of the United States and German superstar Boris Becker are among those due to take part. In the letter, the activists said they could not tolerate an event which was aimed at selling tobacco to young people. However, a spokeswoman for Reynolds said the company's advertisements were aimed at smokers above the legal smoking age of 20.

China Communist school to teach capitalism

PEKING (R) — The head of China's central party school, a Marxist training ground for leaders of the world's last major Communist state, said Monday that the school would now teach the basics of capitalism. School Vice President Xu Xing told the official Xinhua News Agency that instead of focusing on ideological purity, the central party school wanted to "improve capabilities of trainees for economic management." Mr. Su said the school's new focus was the "Socialist market economy", senior leader Deng Xiaoping's combination of strict political control and greater economic freedom. "New courses cover finance, real estate and securities," Mr. Su was quoted as saying. "It is important to have a real understanding of rules governing economic operation and the law of value."

Auction of Kadar estate raises 207,000

BUDAPEST (R) — The weekend auction of former Hungarian communist Party chief Janos Kadar's estate fetched 18 million forints (\$207,000), most of which will go to charity, the sale's organisers said Monday. Wilma Patzay, director of the art gallery that handled the auction, told Hungarian radio that more than 90 per cent of the belongings from the estate of Mr. Kadar and his wife, Maria, had been sold. A golden wristwatch that former Soviet Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev had presented to Mr. Kadar fetched the biggest single offer. An unidentified Hungarian woman paid 1.1 million forints (\$12,650) for the watch, whose case carried the inscription "To my friend Janos Kadar, with respect, Brezhnev".